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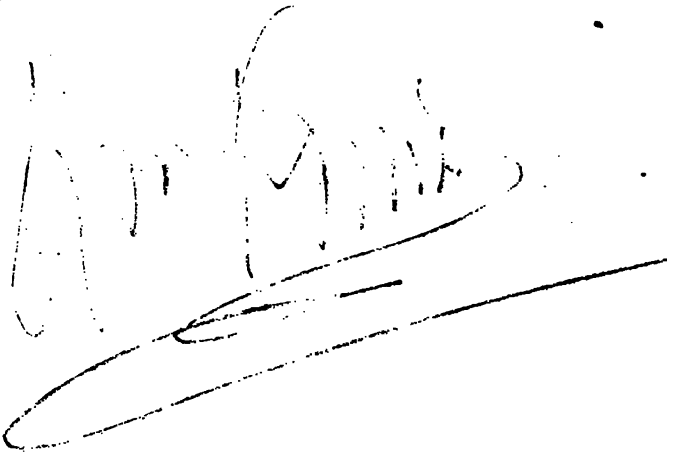

Peck, Ellen

MARY BRANDEGEE.

An Autobiography.

EDITED BY

CUYLER PINE.

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MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN A. DIX,

In permitting me the honor of dedicating this book to you, you add one more to the many kindnesses which had already won my heart, and which make me happy and proud to call my friend one whose able and wise career is crowned by an integrity and virtue that render it brightly conspicuous in a time much in need of good examples. — May our countrymen be always as just to you as you have been faithful to them.

C. P.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

To give my own opinion of these pages, when opinions will be as numerous as readers, would be assuming too much on the strength of a position of which I have no right to take advantage. I owe my own interest in these memoirs to the accident which has thrown them on my sanction, and the author's near connection with a beloved sister. My editorial *imprimatur* is given with all the uncertainty natural to the position of one led by circumstances to set his seal on a work belonging as little to himself as to those to whose eyes it comes with his signet. As the responsibility is assumed voluntarily, I do not offer my own knowledge of its faults as an appeal for leniency. Though looking on these memoirs with feelings similar to those with which Prometheus must have regarded the box of Pandora, allied to them on the pricinple which attaches a sympathetic soul to a bird or a waif, merely because it has flown in at his own doors, or been stranded on his own shores, I am yet forced to send them forth unsupported and solitary, in the full assurance that the author would never have consented to magnify her own merits in the eyes of the world, or to ask from criticism any thing but justice.

CUYLER PINE.

MARY BRANDEGEE.

PART I.

To begin this narrative at the point where every narrative ought to begin, — namely, at the beginning, — it will be necessary to go back to the time when I was born. That event took place in the spring of the year eighteen hundred and forty-one, a few months subsequent to the death of my father. My mother left me an orphan at the age of three years, and I was taken into the family of my guardian, — Mr. John Brandegee, of Virginia. Before I was ten, I was adopted by my guardian, was made his heiress, and assumed his name, — his attachment to me being heightened by the loss of his wife shortly afterward, which left me the only object of his care and affection. My father (for, as Mr. Brandegee entirely filled the place of that parent, I never called him by any other name) had taken up his residence in New York for several years, for the sake of affording me the advantage of a more complete system of education than was possible at home. I had masters in languages, drawing, and music, and the last of these became my passion; my mind was so wrapped up in it that, short as were my hours of practice, I arrived at a far greater proficiency in this than in any other pursuit. Without being in society, I saw a great deal of the best: my father was a gentleman of means, and of a lively, social temper, and often assembled at his house men of intelligence, education, and position like himself. Accustomed to take daily the head of his table, and to mingle in conversation with his guests, my ideas soon rose beyond my years, and my duties as hostess sat easily upon me. My father allowed me a free use of pocket-money; and, as he fostered in his own mind a love of

display, I endeavored to please him by adherence to the latest fashions, and by decided elegance and richness of attire. This was, however, only at home: I had sufficient good sense to observe a plain rule of dress at school, and avoided all ornament.

For several months before my father took up his residence in the city, I was sent there to await his coming at a fashionable boarding-school. With regard to the general advantage of such institutions I am incompetent to decide, my knowledge of them being entirely limited to the only one within whose walls I was an inmate. I formed there the acquaintance of many whose characters I have always regarded with emotions of esteem and love; but, young and easily influenced as I then was, and by no means exempt from certain weaknesses of character, my keener moral sense was blunted by the constant examples of evil which I could not reprehend. Few among my associates were uniformly respectful to their teachers, conscientious in the discharge of their duties, or correct in their deportment and conversation. I fell into the lighter errors almost unavoidably; and my innocence of the graver ones was by no means owing to ignorance of their existence.

The rules of the school required all the lights to be extinguished by ten o'clock; and, on my first admittance, I was shocked to perceive that nearly all the young ladies in the dormitory relit their lamps when the monitor had passed, and sat up in bed to read trashy novels until a late hour. Before I had been very long assailed by the temptation, I did not hesitate to gaze over the shoulder of my bed-fellow, and join in the perusal of her book; and the next natural proceeding was the accumulation, on my own account, of a mass of helter-skelter literature, not calculated for the benefit of either mind or morals.

It was the night before our examination at the close of the term, and I had on hand an immense amount of labor for the next day. As I knelt by the window of one of the deserted recitation-rooms, turning the leaves of Noel and Chapsal, one of the young ladies arose from a seat quite near me, and saying, "There! it looks interesting, but I must study for review," she threw a novel on the table beside me, and withdrew. It was the "Martin the Foundling" of Eugene Sue. I opened it, became interested, and read till past sunset. On the plea of studying for review, I sat up stairs all the evening, engaged in the perusal of that most reprehensible work. The other girls kept awake this night, engaged with their lessons, in view of the

next day's examination; but I was still engrossed by the novel. My wearied companions fell, one by one, asleep. I still read on, and took no note of time, till the light of my lamp grew dim at the approach of day. I rose with swimming eyes and aching head. I did get through the examination, though I did not acquit myself so honorably as I might have done had I been in full possession of my faculties. During the evening, one of the teachers came to me with "Martin the Foundling" in her hand, and said, "Is this yours, Miss Brandegee?" I said it was not. "You have read it?" I answered again in the negative. She believed me; as my character for veracity was firmly established. It was the first direct untruth of which I had been guilty; and as it was followed by a transient remorse without repentance, it was the first step that hardened my conscience, and blunted my morals. The evil was already done when I left school to live at my father's house and go through a course of private instruction.

The misdemeanors of the two years ensuing, it is not my intention to recount. With one sigh of regret do I pass over my wasted opportunities, my neglected advantages, my worse than squandered time up to my sixteenth birthday, when my father informed me, to my utter consternation, that he intended to set sail in the autumn for England, and was at present engaged in arranging his affairs for a trans-Atlantic voyage. It was in vain that I begged to accompany him, — he would not hear to it, and said that he was to leave me under the guardianship of his brother-in-law, General Berkeley, — in whose charge I was to remain until his return, — or, if I preferred, he would send me again to school.

I felt little attachment to the boarding-school, yet decided at once in its favor. I did not like Mrs. Berkeley at all, and thought it would be highly disagreeable to enter her family. Early in the summer, her eldest daughter, whom I had seen often at her uncle's house, and who was a very pretty, elegant girl, though I had scarcely sufficient discrimination to see it at the time, was married to a Southern gentleman, Lecompton by name. The wedding took place in Washington, to which city my father went on the occasion, immediately after which the young bride and her husband left for the South.

A week or two previous to my father's departure for Europe, General Berkeley called to see him, stated that his old friend Wriothesley was dead, and had left a young daughter in his charge, and he wished to place her at the same school with me for a couple of years. He had also another ward, a Miss Olivia

Schermerhorn, whose health was so delicate that he hesitated to send her away. The General further remarked that he had been the day previous to take his younger children up the North River to school, for their mother had quarrelled with them so much because they were not handsome, that home was no longer endurable for them.

I went back to the boarding-school at the commencement of the fall term, just before my father sailed for Europe. The two wards of General Berkeley were there, and with Miss Schermerhorn I soon became acquainted. She was a modest, retiring girl, truly conscientious and upright, but suffered constantly from ill health, — the offspring of a feeble constitution. Miss Hinda Wriothesley I soon discovered had been at boarding-school before. She was a very beautiful girl, about my own age, pleasant and winning in her manners, a favorite with the teachers, and popular in the school. She was quite conscious of her beauty, and well aware of the importance of the attendant graces. As she was in none of my classes, I saw but very little of her; sometimes, all through the day barely exchanged a greeting on the stair-way, — but I could not view without admiration the changing expression of her soft eyes, her sweet lips, her bright cheeks dimpled with the most winning of smiles. Had I gazed with more discrimination into those clear, blue orbs, I might have seen that often as they beamed with the forced light of enthusiasm, there was neither heart nor soul in their azure depths.

By the following spring, Olivia Schermerhorn's health had failed so entirely, that Mrs. Berkeley removed her from the school. Another year rolled away; till at near the close of the school term in the early part of '59, Miss Wriothesley, with some little agitation of manner, met me at the head of a staircase, where I was waiting to go into recitation, with the question, "Miss Brandegee, has Mrs. Berkeley informed you that you are to leave school when this term is out?"

I replied that she had not, and Miss Wriothesley now told me that she had received a note from that lady to the effect that we were both to pack up when the term was out, and prepare to go into the country with her. "And a horrid old Virginia villa, I am told," continued the young lady, "quite out of the world. It's like being buried alive."

There was nothing to be done, however, as was proved beyond a question, when a petition, signed by Miss Wriothesley and myself, addressed to Mrs. Berkeley, requesting to remain where we were, was replied to by a peremptory order to be ready when the term was out, and make no delay with baggage.

I was forced to be reconciled; but my preparations were made with many forebodings. The party to the country consisted of Mrs. Berkeley, her daughter Agatha, Livy Schermerhorn, Hinda Wriothesley, and myself. We arrived on a pleasant evening near the close of the month of May. The house was situated on an eminence near the Potomac river, at the distance of a few minutes' walk from its banks. It was built of brick, was rambling in structure, and surrounded by a thick grove of trees, which afforded in the summer season an abundant and delightful shade, concealing all but the turrets of the mansion from view of the highway. The plantation, skirted by a sort of hamlet formed of the negro huts, stretched away to the southward; and its presiding genius, who was at once agent, overseer, and steward, was a Northerner rejoicing in the euphonious name of M'Glinchey.

My many years' residence at the North had made me a Southerner only by nativity, and had left me in absolute ignorance of Southern manners and customs. I had never been as far south as even Virginia; and went thither with no knowledge connected with any State below the border, except what was gleaned from my childish reminiscences of the Mississippi, on whose banks I was born.

The scenes to which I now came as a stranger, awakened no association that could endear them to my heart, except the knowledge that this was my father's native State; but I soon discovered that there would be sufficient to attach me. General Berkeley's was a fine old house, — no older, perhaps, than the Revolutionary war, — but the stamp of the colonial days was indisputably upon it. The wide staircases led off by circular flights from either side of the hall; branching off in wings from the main building, which contained the parlors and library, were the dining-room, extension rooms, and a small apartment in which Mrs. Berkeley was usually to be found in the morning. Of the chambers above, I was allotted one directly over the front door of the hall, and I could thus command a view of the broad avenue running down through the trees to the gate. We were left to roam about very much at our leisure, and it was my delight to wander through the handsomely furnished apartments; to throw myself in the velvet-covered arm-chairs in the library, and remain deep buried in the pages of a book; and to lose myself in contemplation of the elegant paintings which adorned the walls of the dining-room and parlors, — or, in gazing at the portraits in the hall, seeking to trace in the features of the deceased members of the houses

of Berkeley and Brandegee a resemblance to those of their living representatives.

The hour at which the family dined was six, Mrs. Berkeley's city habits asserting their sway in the seclusion of her country home. The furniture of the dining-room was massive oak; the service of plate had been in the possession of General Berkeley's great-grandfather, and was solid and valuable, though the fashion marked it as belonging to a past generation. The table linen, which it must have been a trouble and expense to procure, since the board was capable of elongation for the whole length of the dining-room, was kept under Mrs. Berkeley's own eye and direction; and, while speaking of this lady, I may as well remark, that every member of the household stood in awe of her, from the four young ladies who appeared in her presence as seldom as possible, down to the negro footman who rode behind her carriage; for apart from the apprehension of the violent passion by which she was occasionally moved, there was something in her deep palatal voice, and something more in the stern light of her dark eye, that made the gentler phases of her wrath a thing to be dreaded. General Berkeley we saw but seldom, — he came home at intervals of from six weeks to three months' duration, and never remained longer than a few days. He was a man of a kind heart, and a warm, affectionate temper, — very fond of his children, as was made manifest by his demeanor to Agatha, — and the best possible husband for such a wife as he was unfortunate enough to possess. Mrs. Berkeley never interfered with, or contradicted him, and beyond an occasionally severe repartee, his visits were not characterized by any unpleasant occurrence.

Mrs. Berkeley had ten children, whom, to avoid lengthy explanations in the course of my story, I may as well make mention of in order. Their respective ages ranged from twenty-six to twelve. Gouverneur was the eldest son, — Catherine I had not seen since her marriage with Mr. Lecompton; beside these, there were John, George, Judith, Agatha, Charles, Mary, Christopher, and Bess. Judith, the eldest daughter unmarried, was spending the summer at a watering-place with an aged relative of the family — a Mrs. Chauncey — who was usually spoken of as Aunt Messy. (Hinda said her name was Messalina, but I could not believe it possible.) Charles was at West Point, and the three younger children, as I have already remarked, were at school. Beside these, there were three sons of General Berkeley by a former marriage — Jefferson, Nicholas, and Dan, who, as I had been informed, cordially hated their step-mother. Mrs.

Berkeley never mentioned them, and all that I learned of them was, that Jefferson was president of a Southern railroad company, and that Nicholas was travelling in Spain.

We had been for several weeks at the country-seat, during which our existence was but little diversified, and then in a very wearisome manner; when, one morning, as I was in Mrs. Berkeley's parlor with her and her daughter, a servant brought in a letter which he laid before his mistress. After wondering for some time whom a letter post-marked Savannah could be from, Mrs. Berkeley broke the seal.

"Kassie?" suggested Agatha, or Gatty as she was familiarly called, — and who, like her two elder sisters, was endowed with no common share of beauty, — "or father, or possibly Dan."

"Dan, — yes," said Mrs. Berkeley, as giving the letter a final twist she threw it on the table. "It's short, as you may imagine; he goes to Cincinnati by a positive necessity, says he cannot avoid stopping here for a night or two, and will bring Hunter with him from Washington in order to make the place endurable. I know he would not come at all if the general had not left his horses here."

There was a few minutes' silence, after which Mrs. Berkeley sent for a servant, and bade her have Mr. Dan's room made ready for his reception, and a spare bedroom beside.

"Massa Dan a comin' to-day, Missus?"

"Do what I order, you fool! don't stand and ask me questions;" and as the woman left the room, putting up her sleeve to hide the broad grin on her face, she added: "He may come to-day, or he may come to-morrow, or he may not come at all."

Mrs. Berkeley looked rather savagely at the note. I ventured to take it up and read the address, which was scribbled off so hastily that I was sure it had taken a very experienced post-office clerk to decipher it.

"You don't seem to like the idea of his coming," said her daughter.

"I don't like the way he has behaved, Gatty. I have only seen him once since Kassie was married, and this is the first letter he has written me. There is one blessed thing about it, however, he will only stay two nights."

In the course of the morning I went with Livy and Hinda to the river side, and during our walk the incident of the morning was related for their benefit. In speaking of the anticipated young gentleman, Livy mentioned some reports that she had heard of him through a friend of hers residing in Washington,

where Mr. Dan Berkeley had been a great "lion" through the past winter, though it was the current opinion that he was rather wild. Livy did not betray much interest in the expected arrival; thus Hinda and I had all the enthusiasm to ourselves during the evening. Mr. Berkeley's apartment had been arranged for his reception; that is, the servants frolicked up there all day, and brought order out of confusion in a miraculous manner just at night. At sunset the wheels of the barouche which had gone to the depôt sounded on the avenue, but the barouche was empty, and the negro on the box, after shouting out his wrath at a black boy who knocked off his hat with a bean pole, answered to Mrs. Berkeley's question: "Hasn't come, Missus."

The next day the barouche travelled off again, and returned as it went. Mrs. Berkeley's wrath was excited. She vowed it should not go a third time, and if Dan came the next night, he should walk. But by the following evening she had relented, and the barouche did go the third time. As I stood in my apartment arranging my hair, Livy came in to say that the young gentleman had arrived. Hinda rushed through the side-door from her room, exclaiming, that Mr. Berkeley was here, — she had caught a glimpse of him over the stairway, and he came into the hall and kissed the old black woman, Maggie, and then Maggie in person interrupted our council of three by the hurried news that "Massa Dan had come."

There was a great deal of fuss, — it seemed to me far more than the occasion demanded. I called to Maggie to shut the door, as I heard the strangers ushered up the stairs, and hastened to complete my toilette. Mrs. Berkeley was already in the dining-room when we came down, and I fancied she looked rather vexed. A minute after, her step-son came in. It is said that a great deal depends on first impressions; and mine, in this instance, were very decided. Dan Berkeley was above the medium height, rather slenderly made, of a very fine figure, and in physiognomy strikingly handsome. His manner bore all the traces of a long intercourse with the world, and exhibited a polish such as is rarely displayed, though it then escaped my undiscriminating eyes, which failed to perceive the charm in simplicity. He came up to Mrs. Berkeley, whom he greeted in a manner not at all indicative of hostility, though far from affectionate, stooped to bestow a kiss on the lips which Gatty offered, and then his step-mother signed to us to come out of the background.

"Miss Brandegee, Miss Schermerhorn, Miss Wriothesley, — Mr. Dan Berkeley." The young gentleman bowed low on these

introductions, casting at each of our trio in succession a glance which did not last a single second, and was diverted from the notice of our blushes by the entrance of Captain Hunter, who was welcomed by Mrs. Berkeley and her daughter as an old acquaintance, after which we all took seats at the dinner-table. I soon perceived that Mr. Berkeley, beyond the first glance, was not inclined to waste many thoughts on school-girls who had not seen their first winter in society. Of course he had seen all that at once, and reflecting that he was more than ten years older, and probably twenty years wiser than I, I decided that this must be the end of his scrutiny, and I would now pursue mine. He had a face which a connoisseur in beauty would have called handsome, but there was, notwithstanding, something which I could not like. A line under the dark, bright eye, tainted its expression, — there was a curl on the well-cut lip that decided the meaning of its sarcastic smile, — there was a ready frown on the pencilled eyebrow (that most peculiar feature of the family), which destroyed the illusion of placidity in the character. My unsatisfactory survey was met by no reciprocal scrutiny, — indeed, how could I suppose it would be, from a young man so well used to the fairest faces and finest manners of the first circles of fashion.

In the evening, we sat in the front parlor; I, apart with Livy, engaged with my embroidery, while Hinda executed a few pieces very imperfectly on the piano, but I observed that Mr. Berkeley paid very little attention to the music. I confess that I lingered late in Hinda's room discussing the charms of the handsome Dan. It was impossible that he should not have formed an opinion of us, and we were quite anxious to know what it was. The next morning, as I came in from an early walk to the door of the dining-room, I saw Mrs. Berkeley and her step-son standing with their backs to me, and heard these words from the lady's lips:

"Now, Dan, with regard to these girls, I want you to recollect I must have no flirting at all."

"May I ask, madam, why you suppose such improper conduct possible on the part of the young ladies?"

"Oh, all girls of that age are susceptible, — now promise me, Dan, don't attempt it, — it will make me a vast deal of trouble."

Berkeley bowed slightly, and rejoined.

"They are too young to be thinking of flirting, though I dare swear they will have occasion enough when their time comes."

"Why, how old do you think they are?"

"Fifteen or sixteen. Miss Brandegee cannot be more."

"She is eighteen, and they will all three be out next winter.

Livy is no beauty, but the other two are very pretty girls. Hinda is old Victor Wriothesley's daughter."

"So I supposed. She looks like him."

I was just moving off, when Mrs. Berkeley put a question that arrested me. "What do you think of Mary?"

"Pretty enough, but she wants style, and her manners are school-girlish."

I had heard quite sufficient, and went off. Hunter and Berkeley rode away after breakfast, and were gone all day. Coming in quite late to dinner, Mr. Berkeley appeared quite preoccupied during the meal, and when the servants were dismissed near the close, he took occasion, during a pause in the conversation, to ask his step-mother where she had picked up that pretty mulatto girl, Rosanna.

"There!" cried Mrs. Berkeley, with an actual stamp of the foot; "I knew it would be so! I knew that girl could not be here for the two days that you were home, smuggle her about as I might, without your discovering it. Dan, where *did* you meet her? I told her to keep out of your way."

"Really, madam, I had no idea that so simple a question could raise such a storm! I withdraw it. Hunter, give me that decanter."

"Promise me!" said Mrs. Berkeley, quite excited, "that you won't say a word to her."

"That is scarcely a promise which it becomes a gentleman to make, or a lady to exact," he replied, with some dignity.

"Promise me," repeated Mrs. Berkeley, "if you don't, I shall take means to render the promise unnecessary."

"I hope you won't cut off her ears merely because I asked you where you found her," Berkeley replied. "You required a promise this morning which I did not give, and I have been thanking my stars all dinner time that I didn't, for I should certainly break it. In case I lose a string off my collar, or a button off my shirt, you will have no objection to my asking Rosanna if she can sew, I suppose?"

Mrs. Berkeley looked discomposed, and her ill-humor lasted for the next hour. The two gentlemen lit their cigars, and went off for a stroll through the grounds, evidently not covetous of the society of the lady of the mansion in her present unhappy temper.

Mrs. Berkeley called on us to continue the reading of the Fire Worshippers, which had been begun two evenings previous. It fell to my share to deliver that hackneyed, but none the less beautiful parting of Hinda from her lover, and just as I commenced the lines beginning:

"I knew, I knew it could not last,"

a tall form darkened the door. It was Berkeley, as I felt without looking up. My voice faltered on the succeeding couplets, and, embarrassed still more by the consciousness of my agitation, I was forced to stop entirely, pushed the book to Hinda, and wiped away the tears that had suffused my eyes. "Why, Mary," said Agatha, "that is a very common quotation!"

"What *makes* it common?" said Hunter, while Hinda, with some remark on the heroine's name being hers, went on where I left off. I was well aware that she did not read so well as I, but the consciousness afforded me no triumph. It was foolish in me to be so affected, but then I had felt so keenly that there was not a human being near me who cared for my affection! I was busy in the library quite late, and just as I had extinguished the light in that apartment and moved to retire, Hunter and Berkeley crossed the hall together. As they paused at the foot of the staircase, I heard Hunter say, —

"A sweet set of little girls, but not equal to your sisters."

"Yes, — very pretty girls," rejoined Berkeley, — "will be quite charming when they have seen a little more of the world; and that Miss Brandegee has a heavenly face. I have always thought that peculiar expression of purity limited to fancy sketches, — I never saw it on human features with such power. It would seem that a shadow of our lost divinity falls back in that guise upon the earth."

"Those sweet, pure faces, are sometimes a mask to hide the very devil," answered Hunter.

"I know, — but I cannot believe it in this case; the soul that looks through eyes like hers can only be angelic."

They passed on up the stairs, which were partially ascended when these last words were uttered, and I stood breathless as their steps receded on the floor above, but pleased beyond expression. A man given up to the world, already *ennuied* with pleasures that can bring no solid satisfaction; one whom I felt intuitively had little faith in the goodness of man, or in the virtue of woman, had pronounced on me that judgment which of all others sounded most flattering in my ears. Alas! had I never heard those low-spoken words, he who uttered them might not have found his verdict premature.

The two gentlemen left, the next morning, for Cincinnati; Dan Berkeley informing his step-mother that he had decided to leave his horses, and call for them on his return, when he should

stop at the house for some little time, — how long he could not be certain, — quite possibly a week. Mrs. Berkeley was in very bad humor after their departure, — declared she was sure we were to be saddled with him all summer, and wished him in a dozen different places, all of which she enumerated severally, and none of which were very near. Hinda was quite liberal in the discussion of his faults. She thought him somewhat supercilious, rather selfishly wrapped up in his own pursuits, a little critical, and altogether quite a disagreeable person to have around, which only meant that he had not appeared to admire her. So far, I could find but little fault. I noticed that he addressed my aunt as "Mrs. Berkeley" instead of "mother," the term which I had naturally expected he would use; he had rather the air of a worn out man of fashion; and he had scarcely spoken to Livy, Hinda, or me, except in a manner evincing that he thought very little about us at all. A few days previous to his anticipated return, I heard Mrs. Berkeley say that she intended sending away the girl Rosanna to serve at the tavern kept by the brother of M'Glinchey. She had not been pleased with Dan's remarks on the subject, — thank fortune, the other house-maids were so ugly it would scare any man to look at them. I inquired if Mr. Dan Berkeley would be likely to engage in a low flirtation with a servant. Mrs. Berkeley replied, that what he was likely to do was beyond her calculation; and to some further queries of mine on the subject, she replied by calling me a fool from a New York boarding academy, and sending me up stairs.

This conversation I repeated to Hinda, who was quite as much shocked as I; but as we both were reluctant to believe that any depravity of morals or even inferiority of taste could exist with such advantages of person, we soon supplied reasons for not believing it, and looked forward with anticipations unalloyed by any prejudice, not the result of our own observation, to the day of his return.

The close of the next fortnight brought back Mr. Dan Berkeley. The day after his arrival, I set out with Hinda for a ramble through the woods. It was a lovely summer afternoon, though the air, laden with the fragrance of the wood-flowers, was, perhaps, too calm and lifeless. We wandered to some distance from the house, nearly to the southern highway, where we sat down on a rock, screened by a clump of juniper trees from the view of any passer on the rustic bridge that crossed a brook flowing at the foot of this declivity through the plantation. We had been there but a short time, when there was a sound of footsteps on

the bridge, and the next moment, emerging from the leafy thickness of the underbrush, came two gentlemen, one in the dress of a United States army officer, a total stranger to me, — the other, Dan Berkeley. As the latter caught a glimpse of us, he diverged from the direct path, and while I saw that Hinda's face, and felt that my own, were suffused with blushes, he introduced to us his friend, Mr. Lionel Hervey.

The first thing that struck me about Mr. Hervey was his figure, which I thought quite elegant; the second was his face, which I pronounced very plain. It was no sin not to be handsome, however, and so I fancied Mr. Hervey thought, for his whole manner evinced the self-reliance of his character. He sat down on the rock beside us at Hinda's invitation, and entered into a conversation which, at the end of two minutes, had put us entirely at ease. Dan stood leaning against a tree, a quiet auditor. It was sunset when we rose to return: Berkeley led the way with me, while Mr. Hervey followed with Hinda.

From the manner in which the young officer was received by Mrs. Berkeley and Agatha, I judged that he was not only an old acquaintance, but a great favorite of the family. He certainly appeared to be very much at home; and, as he had just come from the watering-place where Miss Judith Berkeley was spending the summer, he had some message from that young lady to deliver, as well as inquiries to answer. Hinda appeared in the evening in a toilette so artistic as to display her unusual beauty to the greatest advantage. She proposed a game of euchre, at which neither Livy nor I could play; and her lively sallies at the card-table seemed to endear her to the hearts of both gentlemen. Gatty took occasion to inform her after our withdrawal from the parlor, that Mr. Hervey had been extremely attentive to "Judith," and it was supposed that he was in love with her.

"I wonder what she told me that for!" remarked Hinda when alone with me. "If she supposes that I am already laying snares for such a lank-visaged mortal as that Hervey certainly is in spite of his buttons, she rates my personal advantages lower than I."

For the next three days, however, Miss Wriothesley was in her glory. She discovered that there was something elevated, and satirical in Mr. Hervey's air, and she was sure it was not the buttons that gave him so fine a figure. As for Dan Berkeley — he was superb! She did not care what was said about him. He was very fascinating, and a splendid fellow anyhow. Hinda pushed the double flirtation with the skill of a mariner

who steers between breakers; she held conversations with Hervey by the hour, and was on familiar terms with Dan, of whom she asked favors and to whom she proposed measures with a freedom which even Gatty did not exhibit.

One morning Mrs. Berkeley rode away with Agatha and Livy, leaving at home Hinda, the young gentlemen, and myself. Hinda was rejoiced in the prospect of having the whole house to ourselves, and waited with impatience till the gentlemen should finish their cigars and come in. The cigars were finished, but the young gentlemen did not come in. Hinda's chagrin reached a higher pitch. She sent out black Loretta to see what they were doing. The report was that they were looking at the dogs. Loretta was sent a second time. This time the gentlemen were looking at the horses. Hinda grew furious. Dogs and horses! indeed, while she and Mary were here in the parlor! When they entered, at length, she reproached Berkeley, with a playful air, for his want of attachment to her society, and declared she would not forgive it unless he came in and remained at her feet all the morning.

Berkeley excused himself from such an unprofitable way of spending the morning, by saying that he was obliged to go away with Hervey, and his remaining outside so long just now was for the sake of reconciling himself to the longer absence in prospect.

"Oh, that was just the thing!" Hinda cried; "she had been longing for a ride for the last ten days, — she could go with him, and so could dear Mary."

Berkeley informed "dear Miss Hinda" that it was very unfortunate the carriage had but one seat; which was no sort of objection to be sure, but he and Hervey were to return on the horses' backs, and unless Hinda and I were equal to the feat of riding behind him and his companion on pillions, he did not see how we were to get back. Hinda suggested that Berkeley should take a carriage with two seats, and tie Mr. Tyler's behind it by the shafts. To this he replied that Mrs. Berkeley had taken the barouche, and there was nothing else with two seats on the premises, but a lumbering box-wagon. Hinda said she should make no objection to the box-wagon, on which Berkeley alleged that he would be obliged to stop at the blacksmith's, — one of the horses wanted shoeing, and it would be highly unpleasant for a young lady of Miss Hinda's retiring disposition to find a crowd attracted by her beauty. Hinda said she could wear a veil, and now she was sure he had exhausted all his arguments, and would be obliged to confess that he did not wish us to go. Certainly, Berke-

ley said, he did not wish two young ladies to make spectacles of themselves in an open box-wagon; he knew when we saw it we would refuse to get in; and, moreover, on Saturday, he would ride with us all over the country.

With this promise he withdrew with Hervey. Hinda was annoyed; she was quite sure Dan did not mind the "spectacles," and they must be going "somewhere," where, they did not wish us to know. As we were both in the humor for a frolic, we made up our minds to have a ride at all events, — an intention which was fully strengthened when we beheld Mr. Tyler's carriage and two horses coming round before the door. Hinda took occasion to ask the negro, who held the horses, how long it would take to harness one, and the reply, "tree minutes, Missus," was received as a good omen.

Dan appeared quickly with Hervey, sent for the saddles, and gave some parting directions to the servants. Hinda called out: "Won't you take us?" from the window; Berkeley rejoined: "Take you Saturday," and they drove down the avenue. Hinda bade me run for our gipsey hats, and hied to the stables. There I found her hurrying the negroes, who, by her directions, were harnessing one of the carriage-horses to a small vehicle with a seat intended for only one person. In its day it had been a doctor's gig, but had lost the upper frame, and was now nothing more than a seat on two wheels, known in common parlance as a sulky. As the harness was scant, the grooms were expeditious; they were quite sure that "Massa Dan" would drive slowly, for Woolsey had to be shod all round, and his hoofs were broken. Hinda and I crowded on the sulky, our expanse of crinoline sweeping the wheels on either side, and we reached the gate of the avenue in a few minutes after Christian had closed it on the exit of the young gentlemen.

Black Ben, which was the appellation of the sagacious steed that we were driving, was a decidedly fast horse, and not a remarkably gentle one. Christian advised us, as we passed through: "For de Lord's sake don't tech him wid a whip." Hinda threw the whip at him, and Ben trotted on so fast without it that the first turn brought us in sight of Hervey and Berkeley, who were driving at a walk. My heart began to fail, and I suggested going back, but Hinda reproved me with cowardice, and, as they had seen us, we could think of nothing so ignominious as flight.

"Upon my soul," I heard Berkeley say, — "It's that old sulky without a top! Jeff used to break colts in it."

"I'll know where you are going," muttered Hinda, while,

scarcely able to stifle my laughter, I moderated Black Ben's paces so as to keep a steady distance between the carriages.

"Is that what you call an omnibus?" asked Dan, looking back.

"Such insolence!" murmured Hinda. "Don't answer him at all. I mean we shall have a ride, and he shall know it."

We followed them for some time longer, till, as we entered the village, Berkeley stopped at a blacksmith's establishment. One of the horses was detached from the carriage, and conducted within. Here we waited for an hour or more; the broiling sun already near the meridian, beating down on our heads, while the flies, which assailed Black Ben, made that interesting quadruped extremely restless. Moreover, preparations for a cock-fight were making in an adjacent lot, and the blacksmith's shop was surrounded by a set of loiterers betting on the cocks, and discussing the sport, and with whom two damsels in a sulky by the wayside were the cynosure of stares. In the mean time Mr. Hervey lounged in the vehicle before us, reading the newspaper with his hat over his brows, and Dan walked in and out of the blacksmith's shop, casting glances at us, with an occasional remark that prevented any more open demonstration of curiosity on the part of the betters. To manifest her determination, Hinda left the sulky, broke a branch from a way-side tree, and stripped off the leaves and twigs till she was in possession of a most available switch. The horse was shod, and the two gentlemen drove on with their satellites in the rear. We kept up the pursuit perseveringly, over hill and dale, through dense forests, and round rocky cliffs. The span could not distance Black Ben, and we thus had in prospect a delightful drive of twelve miles, over a heathenish road, on a most uncomfortable and precarious seat, and with a horse scarcely manageable by our united powers. The objects to be gained were, in the first place, the edification of the whole Tyler family; in the second, the discovery of whatever furtive intentions the gentlemen ahead were harboring. But a slight circumstance turned the current of our ideas. This was a few words uttered by a voice from the carriage in front: "How much longer do you suppose those devilish fools intend to follow us?"

I happened to hold the reins as these words were spoken, and, like Jim Crow, I turned about, and gave a practical answer to the query by rattling off as fast as possible on the road home. Ben went at such a rate that the wind whistled by our ears, and Hinda and I were so much engrossed by clinging to the small apology for a seat, and in such imminent danger of falling, that we had no time for conversation until we reached the gate. We

drove through the avenue with faces all aglow, walked up to the house liked ruffled turkeys, according to the elegant simile employed by Hinda on the occasion, and went up stairs to discuss our wrath. "Such an expression — 'devilish fools' — if he had said silly creatures, or hair-brained girls, or even *geese*, but *fools*, such a term!" "Yes, and that kind of fools too! Dan Berkeley need not think ——" "Why, Dan did not say it, Hinda, it was Mr. Hervey." "Are you sure? I thought it was Dan." "No, indeed; I could swear to its being Mr. Hervey." "Well, I believe you are right; so it was." But our wrath did not last long. Hinda, whose temper was certainly better than mine, however little can be said of her principles, was soon disposed to laugh at the whole matter: she thought the sentiment implied in Mr. Hervey's terms a just one; she only wished we had gone on to the bitter end. There was no fun in getting angry. I was not so readily pacified, and determined to keep my room all day. But Mrs. Berkeley arrived just at dinner time, and knowing that if I did not go I should be sent for, I accompanied Hinda down the stairs. The other ladies, as well as the young gentlemen, were in the dining-room when we came in. As we entered, Mrs. Berkeley looked around.

"See here," she exclaimed, "who is it that rides around the country, chasing young gentlemen from Dan to Beersheba?"

Hinda turned scarlet, and I felt my cheeks blanch. We were both silent.

"I cannot have the family disgraced in this manner," continued Mrs. Berkeley severely; "it was all around the country long enough before you were home, I dare say. Fine doings here, as soon as I am out of the house. Which of you was it?"

Hinda and I made a virtue of necessity by an immediate confession; each endeavoring to exonerate the other.

"One was the leader, I know," cried Mrs. Berkeley. "Who drove?"

I said, I did.

"And with whom did the idea originate?"

I acknowledged the origin of the idea.

Mrs. Berkeley said she would devise a punishment for me, and took occasion to rebuke Dan for allowing us to behave in such an improper manner.

"Hervey was the magnet, I fancy," said Berkeley.

"No, indeed," I exclaimed indignantly; and, turning to Dan with more warmth than the occasion demanded, I added, "I followed nobody but you."

Mrs. Berkeley now ordered me to take my place at the table, and to hold my tongue. I obeyed the order in some vexation at perceiving that my last remark had elicited a smile from every one but him to whom it was addressed. After dinner, during a temporary withdrawal of the young men to smoke, Mrs. Berkeley lectured Hinda and me for some time on the subject of our outrageous conduct. She wished us to understand that it must not occur again. To drive all over the country on one seat was bad enough, — but to follow young gentlemen, atrocious!

Somewhat awed by these representations, we both promised it should never occur again, and, glad to be released from Mrs. Berkeley's society, set out for a walk through the grounds, accompanied by the other girls and Hervey. As the night was unusually warm, we were not disposed to curtail our promenade. Just as we had decided to return, Dan rode up to the gate of the avenue on horseback, and as he had shown no disposition to dismount, I suggested that he should let me ride behind him up and down the grass-plot. Dan was acquiescent of course, brought his horse along-side the gate, and everybody else seconded the motion. In vain I declared that I had not been in earnest, — that Mrs. Berkeley would not like it, — that I should fall off, etc. Hinda said Mrs. Berkeley never would know; she was asleep on the sofa, — and persuading myself that it would do no harm, I climbed upon the gate, established myself on the seat, my gipsey bonnet falling off on the lawn, and the horse moved on down the high road.

Dan promised he would not go far, and, in fact, I was so engrossed with the frolic and so convulsed with laughter, that I did not care how far he did go. The result was, that we rode two miles at a rate quite slow for my express accommodation, and it was after eleven by the time we reached home. Nobody was at the gate, and I dismounted in some little apprehension that I might pay dearly for my sport. All the lights were out at the windows, and the house stood out a solemn, black, majestic pile in the moonlight.

Before we came in we had arrived at an excellent understanding. Disgusted as I felt with all the world, headed by Mrs. Berkeley, I would have welcomed Satan himself if coming in a friendly guise. Every thing was so thoroughly amicable, that I felt as happy as a queen. Berkeley reminded me that, being cousins, there could be no objection to conducting our intercourse on the most approved cousinly footing. He insisted that I should drop that stately "Mr. Berkeley," and address him in future simply as

"Dan." When on parting in the hall he took occasion to ratify all this solemnity by touching my cheek with his lips, I left him feeling as though I had found a brother; but, as I passed along the hall alone on the way to my own apartment, my pleasing meditations were suddenly dispelled by the apparition of Mrs. Berkeley at the door of her room with a light in her hand.

"Come in here," was her order. Quaking in every limb, I obeyed. Now, then, did I know that it was twelve o'clock? Where upon earth had I been, and what had I been thinking of?

To these inquiries, I replied as satisfactorily as possible by saying, that I had not supposed it to be so late as twelve o'clock, that I had just been taking a little ride with Dan, and that I had not been thinking of any thing in particular. Mrs. Berkeley demanded to know if I had forgotten the injunctions she had laid on me that evening. I said that I supposed her restrictions confined to sulkeys and such things, and that a little ride on a horse was surely no harm.

Mrs. Berkeley corrected me peremptorily by stating, that it was harm of the worst character to ride bareheaded behind a young man on horseback all over the country several hours after sunset. I endeavored to vindicate myself at Mr. Berkeley's expense, by saying, that I had first suggested the return. Mrs. Berkeley said, of course I had suggested it, otherwise Dan would have ridden till daylight. Nothing was to be expected from him. What in the universe we had found to talk about she could not conceive. A cross-examination on this subject not proving very satisfactory, Mrs. Berkeley put the finishing touch to my embarrassment by inquiring whether Dan had kissed me.

Not liking to say that he had, yet unwilling to reply directly that he had not, I answered, with some hesitation, that I did not know.

"I wonder if Dan knows," retorted my aunt, sneeringly. "Are you not ashamed to answer me in that way?" Having scrutinized my features by the aid of the full blaze of the lamp, she at last dismissed me, pronouncing her opinion that I was a consummate little fool, that she was afraid I would prove a hard subject, that at all events, I was to understand that I was never again to ride with Dan in any manner whatever, — young ladies under her protection should not be allowed to come Lady Gay Spanker in that way, and I was to stop in Hinda's room on the way to my own to give the benefit of the mandate to the said young lady, whom Mrs. Berkeley declared to be every whit as bad as I.

I found Hinda asleep on my entrance to her chamber, and

there was no torch-bearer other than the moon to enliven the interview. Hinda seemed restless when I had executed my errand, declared she could not conceive what Mrs. Berkeley meant by assuming that she was as bad as I, especially relating to the style of out-door exercise I had indulged in that evening. She declared that nothing could have induced her to embrace Dan Berkeley for four miles' extent of travel, without a covering for her head or a stirrup for her foot. Moreover, Dan and I were getting too familiar. I was no more related to him than she was to the Czar of Russia. She thought I must be taking leave of my senses, and bade me go to bed.

I lay awake late, pondering Hinda's words, and came to the conclusion that whatever had been wrong in the matter existed more in her imagination than in my behavior. Berkeley's whole manner had been that of purely brotherly interest. Why should those sentiments be so unnatural toward his cousin? His cousin I was, assuredly, for was not his step-mother own sister to my adopted father? If that fact did not make us cousins, there was no other way in which the relationship could be established. Beside, in his eyes, I was a little school-girl. He had taken me to be fifteen years old. Hinda's sneers were without foundation, and should not trouble me.

With these arguments, I soothed myself to sleep, and in the morning found I had other things to think of beside the revolution of them. Hinda and I were unfortunate individuals. She had forgotten a commission which Mrs. Berkeley had desired her to execute, — I had lost an invaluable key, which could not be found. Mrs. Berkeley was very angry. She took us both to her room, and scolded for an hour, and her language on the occasion was so violent, that it provoked a repartee unusually bold. Mrs. Berkeley concluded by calling us some very hard names, and declared that we need cherish no idea of going into society the coming winter; she should take care that we did not leave Virginia.

We were both in a paroxysm of excitement on her departure. The cherished hope of our hearts was our *debût* the coming season. "Think of it!" cried Hinda, amid a storm of tears. "Here we are eighteen, and in another year we shall be old maids! She is a perfect she-dragon!" After a lengthy enumeration of Mrs. Berkeley's merits, we decided to act like girls of spirit, and be independent of her. Nevertheless, the sense of her displeasure affected my spirits for the rest of the day, and a very embarrassing blunder in the evening, tended further to depress me. As

we were separating for the night, Mrs. Berkeley ordered some refreshments in the shape of lemonade and wines, and as I happened to be standing next Mr. Hervey, he offered me a glass of Madeira.

"Not from you," I said, with some asperity, looking round for Dan, whom I perceived was on the piazza, just outside the window.

"Why not?" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley. "Mary, I will not have such shocking rudeness. Take the wine from Mr. Hervey, or give a reason. Why do you refuse?"

"Because, because —" I stammered, "Mr. Hervey called me a devilish fool."

"I!" echoed Mr. Hervey, looking at me in utter astonishment. "Why, really, Miss Brandegee, I am not aware that I ever used such a term in connection with any lady in my life."

"Yes, you did!" I cried hotly, indignant at what I considered a bold equivocation. "Yesterday morning, when Hinda and I were in the sulky, you did it — you called us both — and that's why we came home."

Mrs. Berkeley burst into a laugh, and said it was a pity Mr. Hervey had not said so before. Hinda, whose cheeks were faintly colored by the recollection, observed, with some spirit: "I confess, Mr. Hervey, I did not think it altogether gentlemanly of you." Hervey looked at her in silence.

"Now, upon my honor, that's too bad," exclaimed Dan from the piazza. "I must exonerate Hervey entirely, young ladies, at the cost of your favor, and am sorry to find he has been suffering for my sins. It was *I* that said it, — fact is, if I said it once I said it twenty times, and as for Hervey, he did not utter a syllable about you on the way."

Hinda and I felt somewhat mortified at our hasty accusation of Hervey, and were immediate with apologies, to which that gentleman replied in a very amiable manner by begging us to say nothing about it. As for Dan, his candid confession had doubly endeared him to our souls. I went out on the piazza to bid him good-night in the most approved sisterly fashion, and Hinda lauded him, *sotto voce*, to me all the way up stairs.

From that day, my rather rash admiration for Dan became more developed. It is not my intention to detail how, through a variety of circumstances incidental to a summer's sojourn in the seclusion of a Virginia villa, our intimacy progressed. My fancy, not my heart was captivated, and it must be attributed rather to want of thought than perversion of morals, that I proceeded, at

last, in direct violation of my aunt's express commands. I came out, one day, in open acknowledgment of my new allegiance, and travelled on the new road wonderfully well. I was laughed at, and encouraged by all my younger companions in the prosecution of the phantasies, in which all sense of my own dignity was finally lost. I dashed ahead in conversation with fearless sauciness, reckless of consequences. I sung light, trashy glees and ditties; fired pistols by the hour on the lawn; scoured the country on horseback with Dan; and, as the height of my daring, strolled off every evening with him through the grounds, or on the highway, sometimes prolonging the walk till a late hour. For the first day or two, Mrs. Berkeley was extremely ungracious in her manners to me, but with Dan to swear back for me, I soon grew bold enough; and when he was not present, I was gifted with a superhuman, or rather a sub-human spirit, of defiance. Mrs. Berkeley said, at last, that she was sure I was going to end in Bedlam; and that if I intended to trot to a certain warm region in double harness with Dan, why, go we might, — "only go on the highway," she added; "and if you are Satan, let us all see him." Yet with this permission for my pranks, I was, in the midst of them all, miserably unhappy. That I was losing ground in Berkeley's estimation, I became day by day most keenly conscious; and in spite of his ready attendance on me, I saw, with pain, that he seemed quite as much devoted to Hinda. I was determined, however, not to be the first to annul our compact; beside that, retracting now was a mountainous matter indeed.

Shortly after Mr. Hervey's departure, a letter from Mrs. Lecompton apprised Mrs. Berkeley that she intended a visit in the course of the summer, accompanied by her brother Jack. The months following had passed away, and one evening, about the middle of the month succeeding, I came home late from a horseback ride with Dan. As we reached the gate, a pedestrian approaching, opened it for us to pass, Dan thanking him with the utmost courtesy; and then, to our surprise, in closing the portal he came inside, and followed us up the avenue, his noble figure but dimly visible, and the row of buttons on his undress uniform glittering fitfully in the moonlight.

"Can that be the postman, Dan?" I said. Dan, who had looked back once or twice, stopped our horses at this question, leaped down from the saddle, and walked forward to the newcomer, exclaiming, "Why, my dear fellow, upon my soul I did not know you!" There was a cordial greeting on both sides;

after which Dan introduced to Miss Brandegee her cousin, Mr. Gouverneur Berkeley.

The features of my new acquaintance were, of course, undistinguishable in the obscurity of the hour, but his frank and ingenuous manner could not be mistaken. We soon reached the house, where a great jubilee was held over the new arrival. For this evening everybody was entirely engrossed in the unexpected pleasure of his reception, and I scanned his appearance by the light of the parlor lamps with a more qualified admiration than either Hinda or Livy were inclined to bestow. Of course I did not think him so handsome as Dan. His hair and moustache were too black to suit my fancy, and the beauty of his face was less refined and varied than his elder brother's. There was, still, a strong resemblance; and the marked family feature, a gracefully curved and flexible eyebrow, held supreme sway over the expression of his face.

Just before I went to bed, Mrs. Berkeley called me into the little parlor to seal a few letters, which she could not do by candle light. While I was thus employed, Gov. came in to hold a private conversation with his mother, and as she said he need not mind me, he proceeded to inform her that he was the bearer of two proposals for the hand of his sister Judith, — one coming from Captain Hunter, the other from Mr. Lionel Hervey. I was so agitated on this announcement, that I burned my fingers with the sealing wax. Mrs. Berkeley said she wished her husband was home, and sent for Dan to discuss with him and Gouverneur the merits of the two suitors. Lionel Hervey, though quite a favorite, was certainly not the better match for Miss Judith; and the decision was made in Hunter's favor, — his overbalancing recommendation being that he had a wealthy old uncle, who could not possibly live another year, and to whom the captain was the only heir. Gouverneur went on to advise his mother to call Judith home from the wateringplace; she was not behaving there in a manner which was creditable to her, or to the family. Dan seemed annoyed with his brother for having made such an assertion; he said he had heard all about it, and that Judith was only reported extravagant, and apt to run in debt. Gouverneur said that he had been there, and if the report were no worse than that, or if Judith's conduct had not authorized it, he should have preserved silence on the subject. Mrs. Berkeley was very glad indeed, that Gov. had mentioned it. She would have Judith home next week.

I had finished sealing the letters, and noticing that Dan was

looking daggers at Gov. on this denunciation of his sister, I hastened to quit the room, feeling quite sure that Judith would be as little obliged as any one else to Gouverneur.

The next morning, I went out to walk in the woods with Livy and Hinda. As we were seated at the root of an old tree by the side of a running brook, Hinda began to discuss the two brothers. In her estimation Dan was highly superior. In spite of her short acquaintance, Livy was sure she should like Gov. much better. Hinda spent quite an elaborate eulogium on Dan, and, at last, remarked that she fancied Livy did not admire Dan, — never had appeared to.

"Well, the fact is, honestly, that I do *not*," said Livy. "Knowing what I do of him, I can never have the slightest particle of respect for his character, and, as a natural consequence, not the least admiration for his person."

She was at once assailed by Hinda, who earnestly demanded to know what Dan had been doing; while I, powerless to ask, for my heart had sunken low with apprehension, could only gaze upon Livy in suspense. She answered, hesitatingly, that Mrs. Berkeley had forbidden her to speak to us on the subject. Hinda vowed that Mrs. Berkeley never should know. I said, that not being intimate with the lady, there was no danger of disclosure on my part. Livy asked if we had not seen the papers last winter, and Hinda reminded her that we were never allowed to looked at them in the boarding-school.

"At all events," said Livy, "you must have heard of the Brancton divorce-case." That we *had* heard of, though very casually. She then went on to give us some particulars of the trial, which had created a great sensation at the time, Mr. Brancton failing to gain the suit by want of positive proof of facts which a chain of circumstantial evidence had gone far to establish. Several names had won notoriety, but the one which had cut the principal figure, was that of Dan Berkeley.

"How long have you known this, Livy?" asked Hinda.

Livy said she had known it at the time of it. The trial had taken place in Washington, and she had been with Mrs. Berkeley in New York. Mrs. Brancton, it was said, was a very beautiful and fascinating woman, and her flirtation with certain gentlemen, and with Dan in particular, had exposed her to very general remark, and some severe censure. Then the divorce case had made a great blaze. From the evidence on the trial everybody thought that Mr. Brancton should have gained the suit. Mrs. Berkeley forbade the papers to the members of her

own family; but when the matter was nearly over, Gatty obtained the back numbers, and came up to Livy's room to read them. Mrs. Berkeley discovered it, and, for a wonder, did not scold; but, after extorting from them a promise not to tell her younger daughters, sat down and raved about Dan for an hour. She called him a scoundrel, a low-lived vagabond, and a detestable scamp, and more and worse to the end of her vocabulary. Livy had felt so shocked about the whole matter, that she never wanted to see him, and was sorry when told he was coming home this summer. Now that she knew him, it scarcely seemed possible that it could all be true; he was so engaging and pleasant that it was impossible not to like him, but admire him she did not, and never could; and moreover she thought that there was a very bad look in his eye.

I had thrown myself down upon the grass at the beginning of this recital, and turned my face to the herbage, while every word that Livy uttered sunk deep into my soul. Turning from fountains of salt and bitter waters, I drank from a refreshing bowl, and the adder stirred within its depths! To escape the heat of the summer sun, I sought the shelter of a spreading tree, and it was the deadly Upas! I had been led like a blind fool, but my eyes were opened! This very night would I break short my course of folly.

On our return to the house, we found in it an unusual commotion, owing to the unexpected arrival of Mrs. Lecompton and her brother, Jack Berkeley. It was so long since I had seen Kassie that I scarcely recognized the quiet, pretty girl I had formerly known, in the assured and easy manner of the beautiful woman, who met me with a cordiality that won my heart at once. Kassie thought I had grown and improved vastly. "Really, Mary, you're extremely pretty," she said, "and as for you, my dear Hinda, I protest you will be the idol of all the men who have a chance to look at you next winter!" She led the way to the parlor as she spoke, and Hinda whispered to me, as we followed, that Mrs. Lecompton was "exceedingly lovely."

This spirit of mutual admiration seemed to have put us all in good-humor. Mrs. Berkeley, Gatty, and the three young gentlemen were assembled in the parlor, and the latest arrived son of the house was presented to us in form. Jack, like those of his brothers whom I had met up to this time, was a handsome man, but on his face there dwelt a reckless expression, exhibited on neither of the others, and his air wanted both the spirit of Dan's, and the manly frankness of Gouverneur's. His language,

also, was in a more hardy strain than theirs, and his manners evidently easier by nature than by cultivation, owing, as I supposed, to the fact that so many years of his life had been passed at sea. As for Dan, I had not turned my eyes once toward that quarter of the room where he was seated; it would have given me the pain that is felt on looking at the corpse of one we love. Every word he uttered sounded on my ear with unspeakable sadness; his careless laugh jarred harshly on my heart. I was glad when Mrs. Berkeley had sealed the last of several letters, with which she dismissed me to the village.

I returned quite late. Livy was in my apartment, and informed me that something had gone wrong. She had heard Dan say to Kassie, that he begged she would say nothing about that proceeding of George's till to-morrow, or there would be no living in the house. Shortly afterward, Mrs. Berkeley and Kassie had gone to the library, sent for Gouverneur and Dan, and stayed there over an hour. Kassie was weeping when they came out, and told Dan she was the most unhappy woman in the universe, and that he and Gov. were very unkind. Livy acknowledged that she did not fancy Kassie; she had discovered in her three faults already. In the first place, she would stoop to gross flattery; in the second, she would speak disparagingly about people whom she praised to their faces; in the third place, she lacked delicacy to a shocking extent. "Why, what do you think I heard her say to Gov.," continued Livy. "She said she might as well spend Lecompton's money, as it was the only alleviation in her power for the martyrdom of being his wife! Think of it, Mary! to ruin a man out of revenge because she does not love him!"

To these strictures I gave only a partial assent. I could think of nothing but Dan, and that in the utmost despondency of soul. I was glad to find my place at dinner taken by Kassie. I thought the whole party seemed rather subdued; Jack was the most talkative person at table. As we returned to the parlor, Kassie desired me to play, and I executed several pieces which called forth her commendation. In the mean time, Gouverneur and Jack departed on an errand to the village; Dan threw his newspaper on the table and rose. I knew he intended asking me to walk with him, and my fingers fell nerveless from the keys.

"Come, my lovely kitten," he said, addressing me; "you play divinely, but it is time for our stroll. Last night I was debarred the pleasure."

I rose immediately, took my shawl from an ottoman, threw it round my shoulders, and went out upon the piazza. Dan waited to light a cigar. As he joined me a long howl of pain sounded faintly from the kennels.

"Something ails the dog!" said Dan. "Wait for me a minute, Mary. I will go around and see."

I leaned against the balustrade of the verandah to wait. It was just outside the parlor window, and part of a sentence from Mrs. Berkeley caught my attention.

"—— straggles out every night with Dan, till twelve or one o'clock, — fires pistols here till the air is rank with gunpowder, — and gallopades all over the country. I really think the fellow's half in love with her."

"Why do you allow it?" said Kassie.

"Well, it keeps Dan away from the niggers; and as for her, the little sap-head really knows no better."

"But you should tell her, if she does not know," said Kassie. "A man of Dan's character — think of it, mother. A ball-room flirtation would be a different thing, but to go out with him in this crazy way. Dear mother, the niggers are surely of less consequence than Mary's reputation."

"Well, she has plenty of money," rejoined Mrs. Berkeley. "If her reputation suffers, she can marry some poor stick and patch it up."

"But it will only be patched, after all!" said Kassie.

"Well, who cares," said Mrs. Berkeley. "She is nothing to us, and it's of no great consequence. What she does here in Virginia will never be known when she comes out. It is talked of here, to be sure, but in a small way. Mary is utterly destitute of feeling. I spoke to her one day about her mother; but, conscience! it would not annoy her in the least if she rose from the grave, and came flying, — shroud and all."

I perceived Dan to be coming, and hastened to leave the piazza and meet him on the walk. He gave me his arm, and we passed down the avenue.

"There seems to be some trouble in the family," I remarked.

"There is," replied Dan. "Kassie says she is very unhappy, and wants to leave her husband and come home. She held a discussion to-day on the subject with Mrs. Berkeley, who disapproves entirely."

"And do you approve it, Dan?"

"Certainly not. I won't hear to it."

"And why?"

"Because it is not respectable, Mary; that is reason sufficient, and it is a woman's duty to stand by her husband under all circumstances."

"I did not expect to hear that," said I, "from a person as independent of the world's opinion as you; and who passes as 'wild,' according to the current phrase."

"And do you not know," rejoined Berkeley, "that it is just such wild fellows as I, who lay the most stress on proprieties, especially where their sisters are concerned?"

To this I made no answer, and as we were half way to the gate, I paused.

"What's the matter?" said Dan. "Are you going no further?"

"I am going no further now, Dan, and this is the last time I shall walk with you."

Dan turned back without remonstrance, only inquiring, in a distant tone, whether it was to my prepossession for Gov. or for Jack that he was indebted for this civil dismissal.

Neither, I said; but my conscience had never been entirely easy. I was determined to retrieve my false steps, and trusted he would throw nothing in my way.

"Not a straw," he answered; "I am not so selfish, — your decision is only what I have been expecting daily for the last three weeks. Well, then, I must travel on alone, — I would to God I could as easily retrace the steps that *I* have taken."

We had reached the house by this time, and entered it at once. Gouverneur and Jack returned shortly from the village. Mrs. Berkeley appeared somewhat gloomy, and granted mechanically a request of Kassie's that she would allow her to invite a cousin of Mr. Lecompton's, by name Jocelyn, to spend the next week with them. Kassie wrote the note immediately, without leaving the room, and when some queries were put to her about Mr. Jocelyn, changed the conversation by asking Jack to sing. He declined at first, on the plea that he knew nothing but sea-ditties; yet when his mother joined in the request, he complied so far as to troll a few light glees and drinking songs, such as were at that time in universal favor. It sensibly enlivened the spirits of the party. Mrs. Berkeley lost her moody air, and at nine o'clock ordered some wine, over which we were all unusually merry, with the exception of Dan, who sat apart at a window with an abstracted air. The rest of the evening Jack entertained us with some tricks at cards, and it was eleven o'clock before the family separated. Hinda lingered in my room quite late, chattering

about Gov. and Jack Berkeley. It was plain to perceive which was her favorite.

"Jack is so clever and good-humored!" said she, "though it can scarcely be expected that any love should be lost between you and him."

In some surprise, I asked the reason, but for some time Hinda chose to treat my ignorance as pretence. At last she explained the terrifying allusion by the fact, that Jack having been named after my adopted father, Mr. John Brandegee, the adoption had destroyed Mrs. Berkeley's hope that her son would fall heir to his uncle's property. This, however, did not cause me nearly so much concern as I felt on being again informed that Kassie had a revelation of an unpleasant nature to make to her mother Hinda had heard Dan ask his sister to defer it till the morrow.

With these warnings, I came below in the morning with spirits which were far from buoyant. It was not long before I felt, in common with the rest of the party, that Mrs. Berkeley was in one of the worst phases of her fitful temper. She swore at a servant about a teaspoon when we first sat down at the table, frowned at every thing that was said, scarcely answered when addressed, and at last broke forth in invective against her son George, of whose movements she had received no intelligence for some time past. When the conversation had become sufficiently general to drown the question, Dan asked Kassie, in a low tone, if she had told her mother.

"No," she replied, "I might as well at this auspicious moment;" and, having called Mrs. Berkeley's attention, Mrs. Lecompton informed her that George had left Washington.

"Where has he gone?"

"He has sailed for England," Kassie answered.

This was received as awful intelligence. Mrs. Berkeley's wrath knew no bounds. That a son of hers should dare to go to England without informing her! — without even a letter to say he was gone! It was not treating her with decent consideration. (I thought if Mr. George Berkeley could witness the present scene, he would be sorry, for the sake of the rest of the party, that he had not written the letter.) Her family was a source of endless trouble! Added to Kassie's silly whims, and Judith's bad behavior, here she was afflicted by this erratic movement on the part of George. It was not to be wondered at ——

Mrs. Berkeley stopped short. Happening to look up in the midst of her wrath, at the side-table, she caught sight of a very formidable array of wine-glasses, which had served the last night's

beverage, — a circumstance sufficient to rouse her in the mildest mood. In a tone of suppressed rage she asked Loretta, one of the servants in attendance, why they had been left.

"Dey wus forgot, Missus," was the reply.

"Take them away now, then."

In placing the glasses on her salver, Loretta was careless enough to let one fall on the floor.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley, in a tone suggestive of the genius she evoked, while Loretta, in a great fright, hastened to pick up the broken glass. "Now, then, when you get into the hall, break another one."

Whether a nervous terror or a malicious spirit caused the girl literally to obey the injunction, no sooner had she passed into the hall, than a second crash was heard. Mrs. Berkeley turned pale, — her eyes flashed, — she started up, and the next instant was at the scene of the catastrophe. A few words were spoken, — then followed the sound of a violent blow, and a sudden cry of pain. Then Mrs. Berkeley's voice was raised in sharp displeasure, Loretta's in submissive remonstrance.

"Is this the usual style?" said Gouverneur, in a low tone, to Dan.

"Did you expect a reform?" answered his brother, with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

"Indeed, Missus, I didn't mean to done it!" said Loretta, sobbing, and returning, as though for protection, to the breakfast room, followed by Mrs. Berkeley in a towering passion.

"You —— nigger," she cried, — how dare you turn your back when I speak to you!"

"Didn't mean to done it, Missus!"

The same answer as before! I felt, with a sinking of the soul, how it would infuriate her mistress. Mrs. Berkeley caught a cut-glass decanter from the side-table, and, with one blow, felled the girl to the floor.

There was a pause, during which the table, the pictures, the furniture, all swam before my eyes; I could not look behind me; I experienced for one moment a sensation of loathing beyond all description. The spectacle of ungoverned rage in the human heart is a terrible one, and from its effects I could not at once recover. Kassie maintained an unconcerned demeanor. Gatty looked sad. Dan preserved an unmoved countenance. Jack sat with his elbow on the table, looking down into his empty cup. I glanced at Gov., — no better there, — he had turned a little away and was looking over the columns of the paper.

"Heavens! are you men or stones!" I exclaimed, almost aloud. Hinda, in spite of her usual self-command, was deadly pale, and Olivia trembled so as to shake the table from one end to the other. During the instant of my glance of discovery, Mrs. Berkeley moved around me and resumed her seat, a look almost sardonic in her eyes.

"Nigger and decanter both — eh — smashed!" remarked Jack.

"I care more for the glass than I do for the nigger," rejoined Mrs. Berkeley. I looked at her with feelings which must have been depicted on my face. Gouverneur lowered his paper and looked around, saying calmly:

"Christian, carry that girl out of the room."

"Let her walk, — the hussy," said his mother, and as Loretta, faint and blinded, staggered out of the room, her mistress called to her never to come near the table again, unless she knew her duties better.

"What was I talking of?" continued Mrs. Berkeley. George's escapade returned to her mind, and she went on to say it was all Dan's fault. He had fairly taken George's education out of her hands; taught him every thing that was bad, nothing that was good; rendered him totally oblivious of every sacred duty; uprooted his affection for his mother, and was, in fact, the direct cause of his going to England without letting her know. The whole family would have gone to ruin long ago if it had not been for her. She had saved her own children from beggary, and the rest from what was worse. What she condemned especially was their ingratitude. There was Jeff to begin with, — the most unmanageable little wretch a woman could be cursed with the care of! After he came back from college he had done nothing but incite her children to rebellion, stir up disorder in the household, run to see cock-fights, prejudice her husband against her, and encourage Nicholas and Dan, who were bad enough before. No later than last January she had heard of his saying, at a public table in New Orleans, that his step-mother was the source of all the misery in her family, and that his father never came home when he could avoid it, on account of her turbulent disposition.

Gouverneur here remarked that he doubted if Jeff had said any such thing. He was said to be reticent on the subject of his mother.

"Some one said Dan was there," returned Mrs. Berkeley, "I'll leave it to him."

"Jeff said it," replied Dan, "and I swore to it."

"I suppose you were both drunk," rejoined Mrs. Berkeley.

"I don't care any thing about it. Nothing that Jeff says can injure me."

"I doubt if any thing can," remarked Dan.

"Come, Dan — take care — if you are not civil I shall raise a row in *your* camp."

"Rows are old stories with us," replied Berkeley. "I thought my last speech was rather complimentary than otherwise."

Mrs. Berkeley continued. She cared nothing about it. The worst that could be said by the whole graceless tribe would not weigh a straw in her estimation. She hoped with all her heart Jeff would never darken her doors again. She didn't care if she never saw him again, — didn't care if he were dead, — as for Nicholas, she hoped he was dead. Dan was no improvement on them. If their mother had not died, and if she had not married their father, there was no saying what would have become of them. She did not care for Jeff or for any thing he had said. Fortunately everybody who was acquainted with her, would know it to be a lie.

"I'll refer it to any one under the sky if it isn't the truth," said Jack. "The fact is, mother, it is impossible to live with you, — I've stood it all my life, I can't stand it any longer, — no, not another minute, — not a second, I'm going now, — and Dan too. You'll have to raise Cain to-day without *my* assistance." Jack left the room precipitately, and was heard calling from the hall to Jed and Christian to black his other boots and find him a carpet-bag.

Why, what can be the matter with *him!*" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley, looking all astonishment. "He must be going really, Dan; go pacify him, won't you?" Dan declined. He had not provoked Jack, — he should not attempt to mollify him.

"Dan, are you going?" asked Jack, looking in.

Dan replied that he had expressed no intention of going. Jack withdrew, followed by his mother, who devoted the next hour to the task of appeasing him.

Hinda was in a state of considerable alarm lest Mrs. Berkeley might not succeed, until consoled by Gov. with the explanation, that Jack's object probably was merely to quell the excitement of Mrs. Berkeley's nerves by a counter current on his own responsibility, — a stratagem to which other members of the family had been obliged frequently to resort.

In the course of the morning there was another scene (at least so I gathered from Hinda's remarks), between Mrs. Berkeley, Kassie, and Dan, — Mrs. Lecompton having revived the subject

of her desired separation from her husband. Soon afterward, Hinda, Livy, and Gatty went down to the woods with the intention, as they told me, of "making a day" there, since Mrs. Berkeley was too cross to live with. Dan and Gouverneur were to join them, and Jack rode off to a livery stable. When the council in Mrs. Berkeley's room had broken up, Kassie issued from the apartment with an agitated air, and gave orders for the carriage at once, — she was going to ride with her mother.

"Molly, never marry a man till you are sure that he is not a fiend," was her recommendation to me; counsel which I promised to follow, — and didn't.

I was now left alone, with the prospect of a quiet morning before me. Several hours passed by in tranquillity, until, as I was executing a very elaborate air from an opera, in the parlor, one of the servants rushed in with the appalling news that "Massa Gov. was killed."

I ran into the hall and perceived Livy, Hinda, and Gatty in a group on the piazza steps. Gouverneur was coming up the walk, supported between Dan and Christian; his face deadly pale, while the bandage round his head, as well as his clothes, was deeply stained with blood. Hinda was raving about having killed her preserver; and I, reassured on finding Gov. to be still alive, would have experienced much more agitation had not Dan's manner been so entirely free from it. Gouverneur reached the hall with some difficulty, which the assistance afforded him could not entirely obviate, and then, as though his strength had entirely given way, sank down upon the sofa. The accident was explained hurriedly by the young ladies, from whose confused narration I gathered that Jack had joined the party in the woods, on horseback, and tied his horse to a tree; that Hinda, having nothing else to do, had untied the animal and mounted his back; that he ran away with her till she met Gouverneur and Dan, who were coming to the rendezvous; Dan stopped the horse, which threw Hinda off into Gov.'s arms with such violence as to carry them both over a precipice, fortunately no more than five feet high, and Gov.'s head had struck upon a rock, while Hinda escaped without injury. In the midst of this recital Mrs. Berkeley and Kassie drove up the avenue. Gatty went out to prepare her mother for the shock, and Mrs. Berkeley looked extremely pale as she entered through the group of servants, who fell back to afford her free passage, and came up to the sofa whereon Gov. was lying, motionless and speechless.

"Is he badly hurt, Dan, do you think?" she asked of that young gentleman, who was measuring a fluid at the sideboard.

"I cannot tell," replied Dan, "he may be only faint from loss of blood, — Jack has gone for the doctor."

"Turn over your head, Gov.; let us see if it is fractured," said his mother. She undid the bandage, disclosing a cut from which the blood was still ebbing, and the thick mass of his dark hair stiffened with the clotted gore. Exclamations of horror ran around the circle, but Mrs. Berkeley, pushing aside a woolly head which obscured the light, bestowed a close examination on the wound; then, murmuring something about the copious bleeding having saved him, together with some reflections on the vast amount of trouble her children had always caused her, she ordered Christian to replace the bandage, and had leisure to glance around the hall.

"It's a pity it was not your crack-brained skull, instead of his," she said to Hinda, who stood jabbering about never being able to forgive herself. I also thought it was a pity. Gov. soon recovered, temporarily, from his exhaustion, by the aid of a mixture which Dan had seen fit to administer, and, expressing his opinion that he was but little hurt, called upon two of the servants to assist him to his room. Mrs. Berkeley inquired why he could not use his own legs, and asked if they were sound. Gov. was obliged to confess that they were not, and, disregarding the numerous questions which assailed him, hastened up stairs, by the aid of the negroes, to his own apartment. In the course of the next hour, Jack arrived with the doctor; not the family physician, whom he had not found at home, but a young practitioner. There were two strong reasons for Mrs. Berkeley's dislike of this gentleman; in the first place, he was a Calvinist; in the second, he was from Connecticut; and I was astonished, therefore, to see her, even in her present anxiety, conduct him with so much alacrity to her son's apartment. Pretty soon she came down to tell the five females who were awaiting the result in anxious suspense at the foot of the hall stairs, that it was the finest doctor she ever had known. Gov.'s skull was not at all fractured, — a few hours' sleep and some infallible drops were all that was needed, and that jewel of a doctor was coming again in the evening. Whilst Mrs. Berkeley was recapitulating the points in this favorable verdict with the most joyful spirit, Jack came down, and interrupted his mother in her eulogium on the physician by saying, with a very blank countenance, that the doctor wanted one of the ser-

vants sent for his case of instruments, as it would be necessary to perform an amputation on his patient.

"Stop, Christian!" cried Mrs. Berkeley to the negro who was already through the hall door. "What does the doctor propose to cut off, Jack? his head?"

Jack explained that there was what the doctor called a compound fracture of the knee, and that nothing less than an immediate amputation would save either life or limb.

"Compound fiddlestick! cried Mrs. Berkeley. "Jack, you're a fool. Saddle up, Christian, and go right away for the old doctor. Scour the country till you find him. I'll know if my son is to be all sawn to pieces under my roof, by a Yankee rascal. He may saw off his own legs, if he likes that kind of work. He's a quack, and I'll tell him so. Jack, come up stairs with me."

Jack protesting that he would rather be excused, Mrs. Berkeley rushed up stairs to break the vials of her wrath on the devoted head of the unsuspecting physician, and, unfailing as the stroke of noon, her voice soon resounded through the upper halls. In the course of a very few minutes the disciple of Esculapius came marching down the stairs in all the dignity of insulted science, and, without casting a glance at a soul within the hall, he walked off to his gig, shaking the dust from his shoes as he went.

In the course of the day the old physician, Dr. Hillhouse, arrived, and pronounced the idea of an amputation positively wicked, — prescribed for his patient after a little different fashion from that of his predecessor, and prophesied lameness and confinement to his room for more than a week to come, to the great regret of Gov., whose original intention it had been to leave on the following day. For several days to come he was forced to remain invisible to the majority of the household. Kassie, whose favorite brother he evidently was, was in his room more frequently and constantly than any other member of the family.

Towards the close of the following week, Judith Berkeley came home, in obedience to the peremptory mandate which she had reeeived from her mother, and, soon after, Mr. Jocelyn's arrival was welcomed at the mansion. Of this young man, with regard to whom it is my province to say but little, I had no idea, other than that he was a pleasant and gentlemanly young man, of rather fitful temper. He was cousin-german to Mr. Lecompton, though they were totally unacquainted with each other, having never even met; a fact not very singular, as Mr. Jocelyn had been all his days abroad or at sea.

The week ensuing was, for me, a very sad and lonely one Dan was devoted to Hinda, and Jocelyn to the ladies of the family, and though Gov.'s illness had, much to his discomfiture, protracted his stay, we saw but little of him, as he remained below stairs only a few hours each day. Jack was thrown considerably with Livy and myself, but he was more careless of our company than was exactly complimentary, and seemed to accept it rather from necessity than choice. There were walks every evening in the grounds, during which Mr. Jocelyn generally attached himself to Mrs. Lecompton, and Dan was invariably Hinda's companion.

It was a warm, sultry day, — one of the last in August. General Berkeley was expected to arrive in the first evening train, and dinner was deferred till an hour later than usual. But he did not come, and the next train was not due till eleven o'clock. The evening gave promise of passing off as usual, but the appearance was deceitful.

Gov. had been down stairs all day, and the effects of the premature exertion were visible in the quick pulse and high fever that Mrs. Berkeley noted. He decided, at her suggestion, to escape the noise by retiring to his room, though he was not going to bed until he had seen his father.

"Good-night, Gov.," said Kassie; and she rose and kissed him with a certain significance — almost solemnity — of manner.

"What a singular piece of attention!" remarked Mrs. Berkeley. Gov. returned the embrace very naturally, and withdrew from the parlor.

A few minutes after, the usual walk was proposed; and Dan with Hinda, and Mrs. Lecompton with Jocelyn, went to take their customary ramble. I had fallen asleep on a sofa in the parlor, and on awaking, at about half past nine, I found Judith at the piano, murdering an air from Trovatore; Gatty and Livy were talking in an undertone, and Mrs. Berkeley was writing at a table in the room adjoining. I rose and went through the hall upon the piazza. Steps were approaching up the walk; they were those of Hinda and Dan. Screened, as I was, by the heavy foliage of the vines, they passed in without having seen me.

"Was that Kassie who came in with Dan?" said a low voice close at hand. I looked around; Jack was leaning on the trellis-work beside me.

"No, it was Hinda," I answered. He laid hold of the shawl on my arm, asking if I wanted it, and, on hearing my negative,

called to one of the servants who was busy at a side-board in the hall, and told him to take it to Mrs. Lecompton

Some minutes passed. Neither Jack nor I had spoken, and I was just contemplating a return within, when the black came rapidly up the walk, still carrying the shawl on his arm.

"Well, Richard!" said Jack.

"Massa Jack, can't find Miss Kassie no whar; an ole Cudjoe says: — Massa Jack, ef you *cud* come down off dem steps a minute!"

Thus adjured, the young gentleman put me beyond hearing by going down instantly to the spot where Richard was standing. A few whispered words were spoken; then I heard Jack say, —

"Nonsense; Cudjoe is old and blind; he is mistaken."

"He's a comin', Massa; he kin speak for hisself," Richard rejoined.

"Mary," said Jack, as he moved forward to meet Cudjoe, whose slow steps were heard advancing up the walk, "will you find Dan and send him here directly?"

I waited not an instant. A glance inside the parlors showed me that Dan was not there, and I hastened up the staircase. The light was shining from Gouverneur's apartment; I heard voices inside as I neared the open door; and, as I paused on the threshold, I perceived that Gov. was lying on the sofa, and Dan standing by the mantel-piece.

"Come in, Mary," said Gov., "and waste a few minutes on me."

"Indeed, I cannot now. Dan, Jack wishes to see you."

"I'll come in a minute."

"I advise you to come right away," I answered. Dan waited for no further admonitions, but descended immediately. I went to look in haste for Hinda, and having sought her vainly, came back, with the intention of going below. Jack, Dan, and Cudjoe stood at the foot of the front staircase; Hinda stood at the landing-place above, leaning over the balusters, looking down into the hall; I joined her, but before I could give any satisfactory reply to her wonder what in the world was the matter, Mrs. Berkeley called from the parlor, to the council of three in the hall, to stop their incessant muttering, for she could not write.

No answer from the group; the whispered conversation still continued.

"What are you talking about out there?" she called, after the lapse of a few seconds; "are you hatching a conspiracy?"

No one replied. I next saw the sweep of her black skirt on the threshold.

It *was* the down train. Poor General Berkeley! my heart was bleeding for him, and when I pictured his anguish at the reception of the news, was thankful that I could not witness it. Mrs. Berkeley seemed determined to make the matter sure, and as we heard the swing of the gate at the end of the avenue, she bade Judith go out to meet her father, and confirm the intelligence. In a few minutes — unspeakably short did they seem — his step was on the piazza, and he had entered the room.

"So, Judith, we have lost our daughter!" were his words, uttered in a tone of despair, as Mrs. Berkeley came to meet him at the door. He wrung her hands for a moment, — walked distractedly about the room, then asked, in a voice which it seemed difficult to command, who had gone.

"Why, Jack, and Dan, and Gov. to boot, with a broken head and a lame leg," replied Mrs. Berkeley, "and a great strapping nigger with each one."

"I must follow!" said the general; "where are Cudjoe and Jed?"

"Jed went with them, — and there will be no earthly sense in your going, — there are no horses here but Tyler's, and they will throw you, or if they won't, it's half-past eleven now, and the train has gone by this time."

"The horses, — all the horses gone," said the general, speaking like one in a dream.

"Why, yes, Jefferson, — how stupid you are, — all the horses are gone, and if you had twenty they could not take you fifteen miles by half-past eleven, for it is half-past eleven now, — understand that."

"God knows I understand too well, Judith," said the General. Mrs. Berkeley had resumed her seat; her husband sat down by the centre-table, and laid his head on his arms, his whole frame shaken by the sobs which were bravely suppressed, and the veins on his temples were swollen almost to bursting. It was fearful to witness the strong man's sorrow, and we all wept, — all but Mrs. Berkeley, who, even at this moment, was unable to repress a sneer that was calculated to wither every emotion whether of grief or gladness, on which its baleful radii fell.

"Is this the way you behaved at Molino del Rey?" she said to her husband.

There was no reply save the muffled sound of a hoarse sob, that grew fainter and fainter till it died away. As the General raised his bowed head, and folded his arms, there was a heavy step on the piazza, and a man, whose face had become quite

familiar to me in my village routes, laid his arms upon the window sill, saying, "I'm Turnouts, General! spose you don't know me."

"I have not the honor, sir," replied the general.

Turnouts proceeded to state, in the nasal tone peculiar to the lower orders of New England, that he had come to fetch information. Jocelyn had been *down* (down *where* was left for imagination to decide), asking about the Washington trains, and buying up time-tables, whereat Turnouts' suspicions had been awakened, and in the evening he met Sutler, who used to sell calves in Washington, perhaps sheep once in a while, but anyhow calves; and Sutler said Jocelyn had bought his horse and buggy out and out, — paid a dollar and a half more than he (Sutler) had expected to get for it; and then Sutler kept his eye on the said horse and buggy till he discovered that it was carrying away Mr. Jocelyn and a female. Turnouts decided it must be one of the general's nigger wenches that Jocelyn was stealing; and he came off post haste, happened to meet one of the General's sons on the road, though which he could not tell to save his life, and he had put him in possession of the facts, though he scarcely paid any attention.

"You told *him*, did you! cried Mrs. Berkeley. "Well, then, what the devil are you telling *us* for? Who wants to be bothered with any nigger!"

Turnouts, evidently rather appalled, said "Good-evenin'" faintly, and departed, just in time to lose Mrs. Berkeley's exclamation, — "Insufferable Yankee," and to avoid having the sash slammed down in his face.

"It will soon be all around the country," said the General. He rose and paced the room with a steady tread, stopping at intervals as a horse's hoof sounded through the casement only to die away in the distance. To those who wait, the hours are tedious; — to those who suffer from suspense, they pass in pain. Twelve o'clock came, — till one, it seemed an age. Nothing broke the silence but the general's measured step, the ticking of the great hall clock, and the song of the night birds out side the window.

"Some one is home," said Judith, "for I heard the gate a minute since, and there are horses on the avenue." Mrs. Berkeley grew pale, and the General trembled with nervous agitation. It was only Gouverneur, however; his ride had been fruitless, and there was small comfort to be derived from the information that Dan had telegraphed to him the message: "Come

home." Gov. had returned immediately, and as he had ridden slowly, expected to find his brother home the first.

"Christian has come, sir," said M'Glinchey, appearing at the hall door.

"Send him in," said Mrs. Berkeley; and the next moment Christian entered, hat in hand, and saluted his master, in manner seemingly unconscious of the errand with which he was charged.

"Shut the door, Christian," said the General, "and tell us where you have been, and where you left the young gentlemen."

"Dey's all a comin'," said Christian, as he closed the hall door; "dey sent me on when we wus about a mile below, to tell you dat we's a comin', an' whar we've ben, which wus more dan dis chile knowd when we started. You see we piled off to de stable, what we did, in de fust place, to saddle dem hosses, an' I strapped up Woolsey wid notin' much but a sheep-skin under de saddle, dough his back *wus* sore, for Massa Jack got out dem hosses in a more wonerful hurry as I eber see. Dey made a little stoppin' at de gate, which, as Massa may spose, dey had to hab, an de upshot wus dat dey didn't know which way to go; so Massa Jack tuk Jed an' went up de turnpike, an' Massa Gov. an' Richard tuk de west road ——"

"Never mind all that, Christian," said Gov.; "where did *you* go?"

"De Lord knows whar I *did* go, Massa Gov.! I went wid Massa Dan; an' he sed it wus de ole Mill Cre'k road, but I cudn't see it. We rid along about tree miles, an' oh! de darkest road in de hull creation — right tough de woods — an' we met dat ar Turnouts, an' he sed suffin' about a hoss an' buggy, suffin' Massa Dan sed dat stuff he heard by Cudjoe. Nex' ting we met wus a nigger, an' he said dar wus a hoss an' buggy broke down in de holler, an' he set 'em on der legs agin, an' dey wanted to know de way to de Cre'k. Den we rode putty fass, an' as Massa Dan had tole me to look out fur de up road I wus a goin' to turn up when we wus dar, but Massa Dan called me back an' we kep on stiddy fur de Cre'k. So we kep along wid de trot putty fass, but somehow we didn't make a gret deel ob headway, kase Massa Dan had to keep a dammin' de saddle, which wus all de conwersation; still when we got up to de Eas' landin' dis yer nigger wus pretty well blowed.

"When we got to de turnin', haf a mile dis side ob de big Mil' Cre'k, we seed suffin' werry dark a good ways ahead, an' de wheels a rumblin'. Den says Massa Dan, 'Wat's de matter Christian? Can't you go on? Kase ef you can't, say so.' Den

I said, in a wery faint wor'ce, for my sides wus achin' like mad, dat I cud go on. He said, 'Kin you stan' a hard pull?' an' I said, 'Yes.' Den he gib boff de hosses a cut, an' dey started — O Massa! dem hosses! how dey did go! Why, de lightnin' struck so out ob der huffs I tought I shud go blind; an' Massa Dan kep puttin' ahead, so I tought he'd kill hisself an' me an' de hosses, all four ob us — up hill an' down hill, an' my head a flyin' trough de branches ob de trees, till I hadn't a speck ob' breff leff in me, an' I cudn't see, nor hear, nor feel, nor nuffin'. An' dis aggrawatin' kerridge kep on, rattlin' away ober de stuns, up by de big Mill Crik an' down de holler, an' den de horn ob de engin whistled, comin' rumkum junkum up to de stashin, an' I see de red light ob de locomoty flyin' trough de trees. An' Massa Dan gabe boff de hosses a gret cut, an massy, dey sprung, an' de white stuff in der moufs flew all ober him an me; an' de kerridge jess got down de big hill, a puttin' fur de cars, an' we wus a gallopin' down after it, when, pitch went my hoss, an' I wus heels ober head by de side ob de rode in a second! I hollered like murder, fur I wus scart to deff, an' as I wus a scramblin' up, I heard Massa Dan shoutin', 'Christian, Christian, Christian!' in a mose thunderin' woice. Dere he wus, 'way down at de fut ob de hill, an' he'd headed off dis yer kerridge, an' dar wus an awful scrabble a goin' on. Den I run wid all my legs till I wus dar. Massa Dan wus off Black Ben, an' he had de buggy hoss a holdin' him, an' de kerridge wus a steerin' round agin de fence, an' a tryin' to go on, an' de wheels wus gittin' all smashed up into de middle ob nex' week. Massa Dan shook me by de collar war I stud a takin' in de show, an' asked me why de debil I cudn't hold a hoss when he wus cotched; an' while I wus doin' my best to hold dis hoss, which wus mose terrible onruly, Massa Dan jammed down de top ob de kerridge, dough it kep a turnin' all sorts ob ways, an' he cotched hold ob her an' gib her a pull. Den she screamed an' hung on to de gemman inside, but Massa Dan gabe anoder pull an' hauled her out. Den de gemman, he jumped out — I tought it wus Massa Jocelyn, but I didn't like to say so; but anyhow, he jumped out ob de kerridge, an' dere wus some awful high words an' hard names. At las', Massa Dan said, 'You're a dam' scoundrel,' an', wid de tussle, he hauled out de hosswhip I got him jess afore we leff, an' he laid it on to Massa Jocelyn's back an' shoulders wid an exertion dat prewented de exchange ob any more compliments."

"Nonsense, Christian," said Mrs. Berkeley; "you can't make

me believe that Master Dan horsewhipped a stout, lusty fellow, without resistance. Who coined that story for you?"

"Missus, I'se tellin you de mose solemnest kind ob trufe. Massa Dan's blood wus up, an' he wus de debil. De lady frew herself on de ground, an' flung her arms roun' Massa Dan's knees, an' den Massa Jocelyn mose got away the whip, an' Massa Dan wrenched it right back an' cracked him ober de head wid de butt end, an' finished up wid de floggin'. Den I led de hosses, an' Massa Dan led de gemman, an' de lady she follered, an' we went into de stashin house, an' Massa Jack an' Jed had jess come up de oder road. Dere wus lots ob people dere, some ob dem was off de cars an' dey wus all round askin' questions. Massa Jocelyn laid down on de floor as soon as Massa Dan let go his collar, an' he look mose dead. Muss say I neber see Massa Dan so towerin' mad — his eyes wus juss like two coals ob fire. An' dere wus a gemman off de cars came up while Massa Dan wus washin' de blood off his hands, an' says he: 'Is dis de way you do tings in Dixie?' An' Massa Dan said: 'Yes, it wus just how dey did in Dixie.' Den de gemman said, 'dis outrage shud not go by noticed,' or suffin' like it; an' Massa Dan tole him to go to de debil. Den he cum to me, and asked what it wus done for, an' I said Massa Jocelyn stole a nigger; fur Turnouts tole Massa Dan dat de young pusson ob de female persuasion wus one ob de wenches. Den he wanted to know ef it wus Massa Dan's nigger, an' I sed it wus General Berkeley's; an' he asked me den ef it wus a woman, but I tought tree questions wus too many, an' I didn't hab any more conwersation, an' de cars started den, an' he ran to get on. Den Massa Dan seed to de telegrab an' we come home, an' dey'se a ridin' slow an' sent me ahead to tell."

"You are a faithful fellow, Christian," said the General, in a more collected tone than I had expected; and then the voices of the young men were heard outside the window, — a bustle in the hall ensued, followed by the entrance of Jack and Dan Berkeley. The General gave his hand to each in silence. Both looked tired and travel soiled, and Dan's features were pale with exhaustion.

"Go and help Jed to rub down the horses," said Gov. to Christian.

"And look alive, you black devils," added Jack to the negroes outside, "no chattering among yourselves, — finish your business and get to bed."

The doors of the apartment were closed, while every face within presented an aspect of forced, unnatural calmness.

"Well, Dan," said the General, turning to his elder son, "Is it too late to save her?"

"Save her!" echoed Mrs. Berkeley; "you may measure me for my coffin when that woman is admitted again within these doors."

"Rather too late, I think, sir," said Dan; "besides, there is very little sense in trying to save those who will not save themselves."

"Alas! where will she go?" said Judith.

"I must make the effort to save her," said the General. "Where did you leave her, Dan? at the depôt?"

"Jefferson! there are no horses!" cried Mrs. Berkeley, "except those that are all tired out, and Mr. Tyler's, which are not safe to ride."

"I and Jed rode Tyler's horses," said Jack, "and I left two of ours to go for father."

"Why did you ride another man's horses, instead of ours?" asked his mother.

"Because," said Jack, "the two I left were too slow for our purpose, and as for Tyler, he cannot blame me for taking the fastest nags within my reach. If our horses were there, and his sister was running away, we would not breathe an objection, if he rode them to death."

"There are two fresh horses!" said the general. "I will have them harnessed at once, and go to the station."

"But only listen, my dear sir," said Gov. "The next train stops at that station at two in the morning, and it is nearly half past one. She will be gone before you can possibly get there."

Despair settled once more on the General's features.

"It's a miserable mortal that she has gone with," said Jack. "Dan flogged him within an inch of his life."

"Dan, you're a trump," said Mrs. Berkeley, and, going up to her step-son, she gave him her hand. "Now that you have horse-whipped the infernal scoundrel, I can carry my head in the clouds."

The General now spoke of Mr. Lecompton and of the absent members of the family. Then some one mentioned Captain Hunter. It was suggested that the General should offer to release him from his engagement to Judith. No one could see the slightest reason for that however, beyond the author of the proposal, who was Judith herself. In a tone of forced quiet, a few more arrangements were made, and, as it was now very late, the family prepared to separate. The General took his daughters in

his arms, and gave them his blessing in a faltering voice. No longer could the feelings, hitherto so well governed, be repressed. Judith sat down weeping, and Gatty sobbed on her father's breast. Mrs. Berkeley covered her face with her hands, laid her head on the back of the arm-chair by which she stood, and, with a half-stifled groan, she murmured, "O Kassie!"

The hectic spot on Gouverneur's cheek brightened into a flush that crimsoned his finely-cut features. He burst into tears, rose, and left the room.

"Go upstairs with him, Jack," said Dan. "He is very lame to-night." Jack followed his brother, and the General bade Dan come with him to the library. I took the first opportunity of escaping from the room with my companions. They stopped in my apartment to discuss the late scene, and I could not avoid asking Hinda, if she thought there had been excitement sufficient for one evening. Livy was very sorry about the whole affair, though she could not say that she liked Kassie very much. Hinda said she never had liked her at all. In vain did I cite instances wherein she had expressed unbounded admiration of Mrs. Lecompton. Her treacherous memory was not to be refreshed. Never had she uttered a syllable in praise of such an awful woman. Such a voice as she had — Hinda hated a voice that came down so strong on the gutturals — so much like Mrs. Berkeley's. Livy said her objection to Kassie had never been made on account of her voice, or any other physical attribute, and really and truly she did think that the foundation of the whole evil lay with Mrs. Berkeley, who had given her daughter a very bad education. "And," I added, "made her marry for the sake of wealth and position." Yes, Livy continued, and moreover the whole family had behaved toward her in a very inhuman manner. How could they steel their hearts against her as they did the other day, when she begged and cried to be allowed to stay here instead of going back to live with a brute; and Mrs. Berkeley said she should go back if he was a fiend; and Dan and Gov. called her capricious and silly, and would not hear a word she had to say, while Jack told her he did not care a rush. And how had the last act of criminal folly on her part affected them? Scarcely at all. Gov. was the only one who had betrayed any sort of feeling in the matter, and as for Dan, she liked him less and less the more she saw of him.

The next morning it would have baffled an Argus to tell from outward appearances that any thing unusual had taken place. General Berkeley saluted Hinda, Livy, and me, with his accus-

tomed cordiality, patted us upon the shoulder, and remarked on our good looks. Mrs. Berkeley found fault as usual. The young gentlemen and ladies were but little graver in their deportment than was customary. In the course of the conversation, Dan made an allusion to his approaching departure, which caused me both surprise and concern. Gov., whose last night's hard riding had not caused so severe a relapse as his mother had feared, did not appear till late in the day, and, in allusion to Dan's departure, I heard him say, that he should not remain more than three days after his brother had gone, and would not be here now if it had been possible for him to leave.

I was quite unhappy in the prospect of their leaving so soon, but my distress was much alleviated on learning that Mrs. Berkeley and her two daughters were to follow them almost immediately. We were coming up to town with the General as soon as she sent for us.

It was a day or two after, that Jack left in an evening train. The following morning Dan had gone off immediately after breakfast, and the General, his wife, and the five young ladies were all in the front parlor, when Gov. came in with a New York paper in his hand, and pointed out an article to his father, who read it aloud to the assembled family. It was headed, if I remember rightly, "A New Example of Southern Chivalry;" and contained the statement, that a highly respectable gentleman had been set upon, and grossly assaulted at a railway station by a young Virginian, who had knocked him down and horsewhipped him to a ruthless and inhuman extent. The aggressor was the son of an officer in service at the time of the Mexican war, who was a representative of an old colonial family in Virginia. The young man vouchsafed no explanation of his conduct, other than that he chose to proceed in the usual style of the Southerners, and treated the comments of a by-stander in a very ruffianlike and brutal manner. The public were called upon to sympathize with the slaves who had the misfortune to belong to the young man's father; the correspondent wondered how much longer all law and authority were to be set aside, and wound up with a sarcastic observation on southern chivalry, which was quite as obsolete among the F. F. V.'s as in the Gulf States.

After a short discussion of the subject, I went out for a drive with Gatty, Livy, and Hinda. As we stopped by the tavern, opposite the livery-stable in the village, to speak to a young lady on the sidewalk, she requested us to wait and look at a little Canadian filly which the grooms were to bring out for her inspection,

— her brother had gone to see about it. Her brother soon appeared with the grooms and the horse, and, while we were looking at the animal, the young man went to the window of the tavern.

"Berkeley, you're a complete jockey," he said, — "just walk out and look at this horse."

Dan walked out with his usual companion, a cigar, and, after saluting the ladies, turned his attention on the subject recommended to his notice. The filly was thoroughly discussed, and the grooms came out with several horses, accompanied by two or three sons of the neighboring gentry.

"Seen the Tribune?" said one of these, handing a paper to Dan. Berkeley replied in the negative, and, while he stood looking over the columns, the other gentlemen discussed the horses. There was a bay, greatly admired, also a well-matched sorrel span, but the animal which attracted chief attention was a fine, tall beast, with a flowing mane, fiery eyes, coal black in color, and evidently very spirited, for the jockey who held the rope, kept an attentive eye on his movements.

"There's a horse, sir," said the livery-stable keeper, "that would be worth a little fortune if he didn't have to be managed just so. He came off the old Carolan estate, and there wasn't a man who could ride him except the old captain. He is the fiercest beast I ever saw, — flung two grooms this morning."

Dan here looked up from the paper, and said, "Are you going to buy that fellow, Tyler?"

The substance of the young gentleman's reply, made in an undertone, was apparently directed against horses in the abstract, a special mention of a shoulder disjointed on the plank-road, being the only thing distinguishable.

"This hoss is offul," said the groom, "won't be rid nor spoke to, nor nothin'."

Dan handed the paper to Mr. Tyler, replaced the cigar in his mouth, and, springing upon the horse's back, galloped up the highway. As we all, and I in especial, were interested in the result of the trial, we waited sometime for his return, and at last he came back, holding the animal down to a steady canter. A few observations were made in praise of his horsemanship; after which, Dan threw aside the stump of his cigar and dismounted, stroked the horse's ears, looked in his mouth, and inquired what he would be sold for.

"Shall you buy him, Berkeley?" asked Mr. Tyler, when the answer was given.

Dan replied that he could not command the price, — similar reasons had often restrained him from doing other things which he might find agreeable.

On the way home I was thoughtful. By the mail, that very day, I expected a large remittance from my father, and a considerable portion of the last was left. Would it not be grand if I could give that horse to Dan? The very next day he was to take his departure, and my action must be prompt. As soon as I received the check sent by my father, I went down to the livery-stable, taking Livy as a witness to the transaction, and, asking to see the keeper, told him I wished to buy one of his horses. He ordered out one after the other, and looked very much astonished when I said that I wanted the big black one. It was led out at last. I made the bargain, took the receipt, and asked to have the horse sent up early the following day, together with a note which I had already written, for Dan.

The next morning, while we were all on the piazza, a groom came up with the horse, and alleged that it was Mr. Dan Berkeley's. Mrs. Berkeley exclaimed immediately against his folly in buying another horse, and Dan, quite as much astonished as anybody else, took my note from the messenger. It was soon read, as it contained but a line, asking him to accept this gift from his affectionate sister Mary.

Of course, Dan had sufficient presence of mind to avoid turning his head toward me. He looked as though he thought I had done a very foolish thing, and, for one instant, I felt a bitter regret that I had meddled at all in the matter. The horse was led off to the stable, and, as the family were not privy to this rash piece of generosity on my part, Dan could only preserve an immovable silence, while Mrs. Berkeley wondered why under the sun he could not be satisfied with two clever, pretty creatures, without encumbering himself with a great unmanageable brute like this, that nobody could drive, and very few could ride. The young ladies entered into a discussion as to a suitable name for the horse, and Hinda suggested that he should be called Daniel, after his owner.

"That was never my name," said Berkeley. "Perhaps, in the course of your scriptural reading, you may remember to have met with two sons of the patriarch Jacob, entitled Naphtali and Dan, — the latter gentleman was the namesake of my uncle, Mr. Dan Hamilton, in honor of whom I bear my present appellation."

"If you submit the question to me, I say, call the horse Dan,"

said Hinda. Berkeley looked at her with a smile, and I felt a tinge of my ancient jealousy creeping over me. I thought, if Dan could wound my feelings by an acquiescence, I should give him up in despair. Judith, Livy, and Gatty advocated the idea, and, on an appeal made to Gov., his opinion was given in their favor.

An hour after, as I was crossing the broad sunlit hall, Dan met me at the foot of the stairway. He stopped me to express his thanks, and said it only remained for me to invest the steed with tenfold value, by giving him his name. He was sure I would not wish to curse that fine fellow with such a name as Dan.

"There is none sweeter in the universe," said I.

"Thank you, — that settles it. *Nil disputandum*, etc., — Dan it is."

He left in the evening train, and, a day or two after, was followed by Mrs. Berkeley, her two daughters, Hinda, and Gov. The next month, though quiet, was a very happy one. We were looking forward to a short visit from Dan, during which he intended to take away his horses; anticipating considerable pleasure now that Livy and I were alone with the general.

But we were disappointed. Dan sent for his horses, but we looked for the visit in vain. There were slight remembrances for us in his letters to the general, which were few and far between; and we learned, through other sources, that he was reported to be attentive to a young lady in Washington. Of the other members of the family we had scarcely any news, and had almost given up any hope of Mrs. Berkeley's returning to take us away, or of our receiving a summons to leave for the city.

At last, one day late in October, it came, — a letter from Mrs. Berkeley, saying that she had given up all idea of returning to Virginia before the following summer, and advising the General to bring us to New York as soon as his plans would permit his visiting that city. All was busy and joyful preparation, and about the first of November, 1859, our journey was accomplished under General Berkeley's care, and our abode established in a capacious mansion, situated in Twenty-third street. None of the young gentlemen were at home on our arrival; and the General only remained for a very few days. But the detailed account of my experience here must be reserved for the second division of my narrative.

PART II.

My first winter! I looked forward to it with the most lively anticipations of pleasure, with many a beating of the heart, but it was not long before my difficulties commenced. Mrs. Berkeley, totally ignorant of my heavy expenditure at the close of the preceding summer, could not, of course, understand why I should be unable to meet the increased cost of my clothes, and I was obliged to resort to economy, which, screened as it was from her notice, I found peculiarly difficult.

Neither General Berkeley nor any of his sons was in town, and the time of their coming was uncertain. About a week after my arrival, I was sitting in Mrs. Berkeley's room, bothering my brains over an array of small figures charged against the items of my dress for that evening's party, and gazing, with a feeling akin to despair, at the sum total, when the lady of the mansion entered.

Mrs. Berkeley's look betokened an unusual degree of vexation. She had come to talk to me, she said, as I was the only person in the house. She had trouble of a new sort to endure, and that trouble originated, as usual, with Dan, who had been acting in a manner that left all his former recklessness and misdemeanors utterly in the shade. The pains which she had taken to send away Rosanna, the previous summer, had been taken in vain. She did not know what law or order, or regard for her authority, could be preserved on a plantation where her commands were so disregarded. Dan was incorrigible, — she had never addressed him on the subject of his conduct, that she was not met by a nonchalant acknowledgement of his knowledge that he was very wicked, and of his conviction that he expected to continue the family plague-spot. She would rather talk to the north-east wind.

She left me, after enlarging for some time longer on the fact she had communicated. It must be remembered, that I was in total ignorance of the worst features of slavery at the South, had

bestowed no attention on the subject, and had never read a book either for or against the system, before my introduction to the great slave-mart, Virginia, where, from the little interest I took in those of the servants who did not come immediately under my cognizance, and who were all concluded, in my estimation, as a demoralized and faithless set, I was ill-qualified to judge Dan Berkeley's conduct by any other rule than the moral one, or to consider that any just example could be supplied by those of his own rank or country.

I took up my pencil, and endeavored to dismiss the matter from my mind, but it would not be banished. It recurred to me constantly. I was strongly tempted to be incredulous. I knew Mrs. Berkeley to be not over careful in weighing her charges, and against Dan, especially, whom she was ready to believe capable of any evil. When unable to convince myself that she had been over hasty, I was shocked to find myself essaying to discover some excuse. But this attempt only served to bewilder and depress me more and more. Though I should know that the same depravity existed with ten thousand others enjoying the same advantages, — the same light of moral law, — it would not avail to make Dan Berkeley's fault one jot the less. Excuse it, palliate it, gloss over it as I would, *if* it were true, Dan was fallen very low.

"Aunt Judith," said I to Mrs. Berkeley, later in the day, "Will you say any thing to Dan about what you told me this morning?"

"No, I'm tired of talking to him, — it goes in at one ear and out at the other. The more I say the worse he gets. Let him go."

I begged to know how she knew it, but she was not in a pleasant mood, and would not tell me, — beside, she said, the thought of it made her so sick at heart, that she hoped I would not mention it again, or think about it at all. This last injunction was not so easy to obey. It haunted me all the evening at the party, and I felt that I *must* find out its truth or falsehood. If it came to the worst, I would ask Dan himself. This was my last determination. My present suspense was unendurable. I must hear him assert his innocence, or acknowledge his guilt, and if, in the latter case, there was any sign of penitence, I would be satisfied. Having arrived at this brilliant resolution, I concluded to lay the ghost until its final disposition should not be a matter of doubt.

On the evening when Dan's arrival was expected, I was early dressed and in the parlor, and stood in the window, under the shade of the curtains, until the carriage stopped at the door. The

next moment Dan darted up the steps, and entered the hall, whither his sisters pressed to meet him, and I next distinguished his careless "How d'ye do, Judy?" and "How are you, Gatty?" and the embrace bestowed on each. I met him at the door of the parlor, received a very cordial pressure of the hand; and, as the dark eyes beamed down upon me, and the old charm of his graceful manners returned, they dispelled for one moment the recollection of that accusation which the next, arose like a shade between us. At dinner Dan remarked that he had an engagement for the whole evening, with Mr. Hervey, at the St. Nicholas, which announced to me that I would have no opportunity *that* night to put my question; and Mrs. Berkeley desired him to invite Mr. Hervey to be their guest during his stay in town. Dan informed her, a few days subsequently, that Hervey would accept the invitation as soon as his mother and sisters should have left the city, which might be by the end of the week.

Occupied as I had been with my own troubles, which arose chiefly from my conflicting doubts regarding Dan and the condition of my purse, I had not been blind to the fact that Hinda had concerns of her own, which were not of the least censurable character. Her life was a continual thirst for admiration, and, in the prosecution of the means, she often lost sight of the end. Her admirers were reckoned by numbers, not by individual merit. A set of curls, a pair of fine eyes, or a glossy moustache, would suffice for her captivation, and I have known her enlarge for an hour on the cut of a coat, or the adjustment of an eye glass. At the opera, the ball, or the concert-room, she was continually on the *qui vive* for some novelty in the shape of an exquisite; at church she was constantly looking over the top of her prayer-book at the youths in the adjoining pew, or whispering some inquiry to me about the effect of her curls, or the lace on her bonnet; in the street she was incessantly looking about for some "excitement," and always brought home a story about some footman who had been sent to dog her footsteps, some "irresistible attraction," six feet in height, who had waved his handkerchief to her from an omnibus window, or some "angel in gray inexpressibles," who had picked up her veil on a street corner. On one occasion, a bland-looking gentleman of fifty called at the house with her muff, which had her name and address pasted within, found by his son in a public conveyance; on another, a young man muffled up to the eyes in a red scarf, and apparently just gone with consumption, restored her card-case containing all her cards, which she had left accidentally in

a picture-gallery. Accidents of this nature were extremely frequent, and their consequences at times were far from pleasant.

One morning, while I was busied in my room, Hinda burst open the door, and, locking it behind her, threw herself breathless on the sofa. "O Mary!" she exclaimed, "such an adventure!"

"What do you mean?" I said, not in the best of humors.

"Why, you know, I went to Jamaica yesterday with Mrs. Berkeley, and to-day she sent me home. I suppose she thought I would be safe enough, for she charged the conductor, over and over, to see to me, and he promised he would. While the horses were dragging the train through the streets of Brooklyn, I beheld on the sidewalk a gentleman whose face I thought was familiar. My dear Mary, I have seen that man every time I have walked on Broadway for the last fortnight. I have wondered very often who he could be, and have contemplated methods of discovery. Conceive my reflections on beholding him this morning!"

"You left the cars, I suppose, Hinda."

"I could not, my dear, — they were going; but they did not move any faster than he did, and I was in some agitation lest he would reach the ferry first. There were two young ladies just in front of me, — they saw him too, and I heard them talking about him. They thought he was 'very *distingué*,' — 'so tall and elegant,' — 'so handsome,' — 'a little *roué*, evidently, but that was no matter, — only an allowable leaven.' For my part, I saw no sign of the leaven, and as for them, I thought them perfect fools; one of them lisped and both of them giggled. When the car stopped, I hurried out to get the first boat, and, on looking back, what did I see but that young gentleman helping an old lady off the car, and those girls were just behind her, laughing and putting up their muffs in joyful anticipation of his attention. How provoked I felt! but he just gave his hand first to one, then to the other, and preceded them into the ferry-house. They were very plain-looking girls. One had a broad face and crimpled hair, and the other had small, flat features, a very insipid creature, — but such bonnets, — pointed on the edges, and such red silks, — I never knew any thing so frightful. I was on the same side of the boat with them, and the gentleman opposite. They kept looking at him and whispering, and doing their utmost to attract his attention, but he did not take the slightest notice of them; on the contrary, I found that he kept looking over his newspaper at me.

"As we came off the boat, I happened to drop my pocket-book."

"Hinda!" I exclaimed.

"An accident, my dear, absolutely an accident. The gentleman darted forward to pick it up, but it rolled off into the water. It only contained a little silver, and I told the boatmen, who were making quite a fuss about it, that it was of no consequence at all, and I proceeded to walk up Broadway."

"My dear Hinda, what an awkward accident."

"Very unfortunate, wasn't it? I could not help pondering all the way up how very disagreeable it was, especially, as when I reached Grand street, I saw the young gentleman still on the opposite side of the way."

"You did not mention his being on the opposite side of the way before."

"Yes, my dear, — an old gentleman at the ferry, who witnessed the pocket-book catastrophe, offered me a stage ticket, asking if it could be of any service to me, but I would not take it, — the young gentleman said nothing, but immediately, as I tell you, came up on the opposite side of the way. A little above Grand street he vanished, and I was quite perplexed to know what had become of him, till I perceived him coming out of a cigar store just before me. He walked rather slowly, and, as I passed him, I confess I could not repress a smile."

"If you are not careful you will get into some scrape," said I, warningly.

"Well, Mary, I was so provoked and nervous; I should not have smiled otherwise. He recrossed the street, and continued up on the other side. Walked all the way up to Fourteenth street. Of course I did not look around, but I knew he was there all the time."

"How could you have known if you did not look?"

"I mean, I looked no more than once or twice. I could not help it, I was so vastly annoyed, and I was afraid that if I didn't look he wouldn't follow me. I mean, I was afraid he would."

"Apparently, your looks were no restraint. Continue."

"As I wanted to go and call on Miss Anderson, I turned down Fourteenth street to Fifth Avenue. He left the opposite side of the way, and I heard his step behind me. Mary, just conceive how frightened I was. I contemplated such wild measures, — speaking to some lady in the street; stopping an omnibus, only I had no money; running into some store, but I could not see any; my heart palpitated so that I could scarcely

draw my breath, — and I knew that the distance between the stranger and myself was lessening every moment. There was a policeman coming down toward Broadway, and I was in such a fright, that I stopped involuntarily, and asked him the way to Fifth Avenue.

He pointed over his shoulder, and I walked on. The incident of the policeman did not seem to have produced the slightest impression on the young gentleman, who quickened his pace as he came to my side, and remarked, that it was a very beautiful day."

"Quite an original remark, — what did *you* say?"

"I couldn't say a word; but there was no time lost, notwithstanding. He hoped I would forgive his presumption in speaking to me, but, upon his soul, he could not have helped it, — I was a perfect angel, and so on, — the rest I have not the vanity to repeat. I then said, that I was afraid to be seen walking with a stranger, as I was liable to meet some of my friends every instant, and I was about asking him to leave me, when he relieved me from the necessity, by offering to go whenever I wished it; but he hoped, first, to hear me say that I would pardon his intrusion. He perceived that I had refused the stage ticket offered me by the old gentleman, and he was prompted entirely by fears for my safety, — he had not intended to follow me home. I said I was very nearly home; and, as we were then on the corner of Seventeenth street and Fifth Avenue, I bade him good morning, and crossed. I looked around once or twice, saw no more of him, and began to feel sorry that I had been so abrupt. Just as I pulled the bell, my dear Mary! there he was again, crossing over from the opposite sidewalk. I was in utter consternation, but he came right up the steps, said there was one thing he had forgotten, and handed me a card, with an address on it in lead-pencil. Think of it, — there he was, right on the steps! What if Miss Anderson, or somebody had been coming out? I heard the servant coming, and the young gentleman lifted his hat and went before the door was opened."

"It is highly unsafe for so indiscreet a person as you to walk through the streets alone," said I.

"Oh, nonsense! It was only a little excitement! No harm was done."

"You know, Hinda, if it should come to the knowledge of the Berkeleys it would raise an awful row. If Dan knew that a young man had followed any one of us through the streets, he would knock him down."

"He would have to find him out first" said Hinda with a

laugh. "Dan is a fine champion of the gentler sex. Beside, my dear, the young man was not in fault. He would not have followed me at all if I had not smiled when he passed me."

I thought it quite probable. Hinda now went on.

"What troubles me more than all is, that I was such a fool as to tell Miss Phebe Anderson all about it. She noticed my agitation, and asked what was the matter. I told her, though I should have held my tongue. She immediately said it was a very terrible and impudent thing, and offered to send one of her footmen home with me, but I laughed it off, though I had no idea she would make such a time. Luckily, I did not mention his handing me the card. She would have raised Cain over that, I suppose."

"Why did you take it, Hinda?"

"My dear, I was so confused, — you can have no idea. I thought it was a card that he had picked up. Now then, I want to ask you about it. It's G. B., at the Bible-House."

"Ask me about it!" I cried. "Why, Hinda, you cannot, certainly, be so crazy as to think of writing to a total stranger."

"Oh, no — that is — well, no, of course — certainly not! My dear Mary, don't get so agitated! Gatty will hear you in the next room. I only wished to ask if you can think of no one whom we know or have heard of with these initials."

"Yes, right away," said I, Gouverneur Berkeley."

"He no more resembles the Berkeleys than the Cæsars," said Hinda.

"Whoever he resembles, or whoever he is," I answered, "you would be playing the fool to write to him, Hinda. I am sorry to see you hug that address so complacently. I fear you have some idea of taking a step, against which it would be extremely silly for me to argue, as it would take me all day to enumerate its follies and dangers."

"My dear Mary, I assure you there is not the slightest necessity for an argument of any kind. I see the whole thing as clearly as you. I protest, I have not the slightest thought of writing to this Lothario, — would not do it on any consideration."

The subject was dropped. For that day it scarcely recurred to my mind, and Hinda made no further allusion to it. On the evening of the Saturday following, Mr. Hervey arrived. I wondered how he could be so little affected by the presence of Judith, since his affection for her had not had sufficient time to subside; but, as I have since discovered, he was a man whose feelings were entirely under his own control, and who was never betrayed by

their violence or intensity into an exhibition of them. Not a single opportunity had been afforded me of questioning Dan on the subject which preyed upon my mind; and so much was I afflicted by suspense, that I had little leisure to notice Hinda's movements. There was a young seamstress constantly in her employ, for her slender income was laid out entirely upon her dress, and I often noticed a letter smuggled into Hinda's hand from the pocket of this damsel. I did not question my so-called friend on the subject, for I was ashamed to convey my suspicion, that she was corresponding with her "Lothario," after her solemn assurance to me, and I thought it would be far better, in case of the matter's coming to the knowledge of the Berkeleys, for me to be able to say, that I knew nothing whatever about it.

As I before observed, no opportunity had been as yet afforded me of holding a private conversation with Dan. In the distress of my mind I could wait no longer; and determined, that if the charms which he had found so potent in a secluded Virginia villa were lessened of their influence by the manifold attractions of a large city, at least he would not refuse a quarter of an hour's conversation, to a lady who expressly asked it. Soon after this determination had been taken, the opportunity for carrying it out unexpectedly occurred, on the morning of the Sunday which was the day following Mr. Hervey's arrival. Dan was late at breakfast, and when the repast was over, he took the newspaper, and sat down on one side of the fire. Mrs. Berkeley and Judith soon left the room. The three other young ladies followed shortly. Hervey took a cigar from the mantel-piece, and went up stairs to smoke, thus leaving me alone with Berkeley.

But now that the time for my intended question had arrived, the first doubt, as to the expediency of putting it, arose in my mind. In the midst of my consideration on this point, I thought I would run upstairs, see Hinda a moment, and ask her advice on the subject. I ran up in pursuance of this idea, called Hinda out of Mrs. Berkeley's room, where all the ladies were assembled, and asked her what she would advise. Hinda oh'ed and ah'ed, and said "my gracious!" and "how vastly exciting!" throughout my rapid explanation, after which she advised me, by all means, to ask Dan the question. She had wondered very much what it was that had worried me lately, and hoped my doubts would be settled; of course, nothing would settle it but a direct application to Dan. She would detain the ladies here, and if she heard Hervey coming down stairs, she would run out in the hall and keep him with a flirtation, or some such thing as

that, and she advised me to go right down, lest Dan should be gone; she should think of me all the time, and it was "quite an excitement."

I came down, and found Berkeley still seated in the dining room, reading the newspaper; only one servant was bustling in and out of the apartment. As I sat down by the table again, I felt a want, not of decision this time, but of courage. But it was banished soon. I reflected that this was my last opportunity, and that if I did not avail myself of it I might regret it when too late; my hesitancy would certainly be no less to-morrow than to-day, and if my doubts were ever to be ended this was the time. In the meanwhile, the subject of my busy speculations sat quietly perusing the morning's paper, utterly unconscious of the conflict going on concerning him in the mind of a fellow-being in his close vicinity.

"Do you go to church this morning, Dan?"

"Yes, with Hervey, to St. Paul's."

"You have an hour at least," said I; "the nine o'clock bells are ringing." Dan looked at his watch, — then proceeded with the perusal of the paper.

I waited until he laid it down, after which he rose, wondered what kind of a day it was, and walked to the window.

"If you are in no great hurry, Dan," said I, "I would like to ask you a question."

"A question! I shall be most happy to answer it. Never mind the table-cloth now, Reynolds," he added, to the servant, who entered at the moment to remove the last trace of the breakfast. The man withdrew, leaving me seated at the table, and before me was Berkeley, leaning against the mantel-piece in an attitude of ready attention.

"Are you sure that we are quite alone?" I said, with a nervous dread, which was not altogether that of interruption.

"I cannot answer for what is in the sideboard, or behind the curtains. As for the rest of the family, Livy is upstairs reading her Bible, and the others are overhauling Judith's wedding-dresses in Mrs. Berkeley's room. In all human probability they will be late at church. I don't know about Hervey; if you have any fears in that quarter I can lock the doors."

I had no fears, and said so, but did not mention that Hinda had engaged to detain him on the stairs.

"Well, Mary, the House is ready for the question."

"If a person brings an accusation against another, but refuses to give his authority, is the accusation entitled to credence, do you think?"

"My dear little sister, that is a very general statement. I cannot decide, without knowing who is the first person, and who is the second, and what is the nature of the accusation. For my part, I never give my authority. Repeating what others have said, is, with most people, a very pernicious practice."

"Very well; now I may ask the question."

"The question is still to come? My ideas are raised. It must be something quite important."

"It is."

Berkeley went to the arm-chair, and sat down with his back to the window. Something in his deliberate motion awed me into a momentary suspension of the attack which I contemplated. I covered my face with my hands for a few seconds, to collect my disordered thoughts, and when my nerves were tolerably calm, I went on to preface my question by the statement of a case. I spoke of a foreign race, — a despised, neglected class, — thrown by circumstances on the protection of a patrician colonization, — their servants, — their slaves, — their attached followers, — receiving shelter, sustenance, and clothing from their master's hand, and giving in return the love of their hearts, — the service and devotion of their lives. I enlarged on their loyalty, — their sufferings, — their great disadvantages, — their buoyant happy temper, seemingly elastic under the weightiest pressure of affliction. I alluded to the duty of those who held them in subjection, — who dwelt with them as one great household, — who should guard them as a patriarch his subjects. Then I spoke of the great difference between them, — the one superior in intellect, — in social recognition, — in their tint of complexion, and formation of brain. The other, therefore, doubly a claimant on the kindness, consideration, and compassion of their masters. "And now," I added, "it is for you, who have called me your sister, — you, who are my brother in affection, — to tell me whether the claim of the class in question has been, or has not been, abused by him whose sovereign duty it is to respect it?"

For the first time, since I had spoken, I ventured to raise my eyes to the face of my patient auditor. Dan's eyes were fastened on mine with unfaltering intentness, but his features were under control, and if they had expressed any consciousness, I was too late to perceive it.

"I think myself rather bright, as a general thing," he said, "but I must confess that this argument is all Dutch to me. If you mean to ask, whether slave-holders are as kind as they

ought to be to their niggers, I think I may safely say, that it depends on what their individual characters happen to be."

"That is not my meaning, my dear brother."

"Then, my dear sister, your meaning must be made more intelligible."

"I have been told," I continued, "that one of this dependent class — one of my own sex — has suffered a foul injustice at the hands of one who should have felt far too much pity for her, — far too much respect for himself, — far too weighty a sense of his amenability to the God who endowed him with the faculties he so wilfully degrades, — to allow him to think with aught save scorn and detestation of the sin he has committed. She, — humble, ignorant, and obscure, — is the property of a gentleman, whose name stands high among the lordly proprietors of a noble soil, — the Patroons of Virginia, — the inheritorsof the Old Dominion, — and you must tell me whether he is, or is not, the son of her master; whether he — so far elevated above her on the social scale — is, or is not, the admired, the flattered, the favored, Dan Berkeley."

If I had scarcely dared to raise my eyes before, it was utterly impossible for me now to command a glance in the direction of my question. For a few seconds there was an awful pause.

"Is that all?" said Berkeley.

"All!" I repeated, — "is it not enough?"

"Quite enough for my comprehension. The idea has reached my brain, at last, and I must apologize for the stupidity which prevented its arriving before; also, that owing to the fact of my having never discussed a subject of this kind with ladies of your tender age, I am quite unequal to carrying on the conversation in the very enigmatical, but extremely eloquent manner in which you have commenced it."

"I understand your sneer," I said, feeling the blood suddenly leave my burning cheeks; "but, Dan!" and I looked up into the pure, dark features, and met the steady gaze of that calm, unfaltering eye, — "we are here on the morning of this blessed day, alone in the sight of Him who made us as we are, and who gave us impulses to cherish for good, and not for evil. The question which I have asked you is so solemn, that conventionalities and customs which forbid to my lips the expression of what troubles my mind must, for once, yield to me, since they were made for me, not I for them; and if I have transgressed the law of society by overstepping any one of its barriers, you, as a gentleman, should be the last one to rebuke me for it."

"Very true," answered Berkeley, "I beg your pardon."

"And you will answer my question, Dan? Recollect, it is a solemn one."

"Yes, I appreciate the solemnity, Mary; also the comprehensive nature of the question, — the expanded platform, — so to speak. At first I thought it related to the enormities of the whole southern community taken in the aggregate, but I perceive it only involves my responsibility for the peccadilloes of all the niggers on my father's plantation. Now, then, will you tell me why you asked the question, and why you are desirous of having it answered?"

I was silent, for I trembled so that I could not have spoken.

"I cannot really believe," said Dan, "that you are self-inspired, and, for your sake, we will lay the question, as far as you are concerned, on the table. My august step-mother has chosen a very lovely substitute, but one who is not equal to the task of delivering her lectures. Don't try it again, Mary, until you are twenty years older, and have learned to swear, to say nothing of being able to look a man in the face with a steady color. Go upstairs and inform Mrs. Berkeley, if you see her, that you commenced, but could not get through; and tell her from me, that if she has not done with her scenes about the niggers, I'm down here all ready, and in battle order. I would rather discuss the question with her than you; her language is plainer, and it is easier to follow the thread of her discourse."

"Easier?"

"Yes, my dear; she comes right to the point, — you beat about the bush. She speaks plain English, — calls a nigger a nigger, and a curse a curse; you go into a long rant about the mountains of Ethiopia, and the lords of Virginia, and the patriarchal institution, mixed up with the regular northern cant about chains and slavery, and deuce knows what beside. It required a gigantic exercise of intellect on my part to discover what you were driving at; and, in fact, I could not have discovered at all whether your discourse was directed at niggers in the abstract, or a nigger in particular, if it had not so happened that I overheard a remark made by Mrs. Berkeley, a few days since, regarding that rollicking, black-eyed little jilt of a Rosanna. I think I could recommend you highly to the Magdalene Society as a travelling preacher."

"I must defend Aunt Judith," said I, "against your suspicion, for she had not the slightest idea that I intended to speak to you on the subject."

There was no reply. I rose, and, going up to him, knelt on the footstool at his side, leaned on the arm of his chair, and, recollecting that having so far made a sacrifice of my feelings, a faltering, when on the verge of gaining my point, would cost me the loss of all my labor, I continued:

"Dan, it is no idle curiosity that has prompted my question. It is only the most awful suspense, — the most agonizing fear that you are guilty of this dreadful crime!"

"My dear Mary, your terms are desperately old-fashioned. These things are not *crimes*, — they are only *mistakes*."

"O Dan! how can you answer me so lightly! A few words from your lips will end it all, and yet you will not speak them."

"How can I answer when I don't understand what I am asked."

"You don't understand!" I said, indignantly.

"No, your original argument was so very obscure that I could not unravel the tangled thread until further developments gave me a clue. As well as I can gather, four or five of the servants on my father's estate were to have been sold this winter, — and somebody has had the audacity to break up the sale of one of the devoted beings, entitled Rosanna. The object of your question is to discover whether that daring individual is your humble servant. Is that it?"

In a tone which I vainly strove to render firm, I said that was what I wished to know.

"Well, then," said Berkeley, laughing, "I hope, with all my heart, you will find out, — I swear I do."

"But I shall not take any means to find out, other than I am taking at present," I said, in a tremulous tone. "You do not answer me, Dan?"

"I do not intend to."

His features wore an expression of contemptuous forbearance which I could not endure. Determined still to persevere to the last, I went on in a voice which my agitation rendered almost inarticulate:

"Only say that you are innocent, and I will believe you. Oh, if you could know how much I suffer in this suspense, you would not be so cruel as to refuse to end it. At such an interest in you, you cannot be offended. I only ask to know that you are as noble and generous as I thought you once!" My feelings gained the mastery, and, covering my face with my handkerchief, I burst into tears.

"Compose yourself, little sister," said Berkeley, laying his arm gently around my neck, "and listen to me." It was a hard mat-

ter to compose myself, just then. The attempt did not immediately succeed, but as Dan did not address me, the tumult subsided all the sooner. When I had entirely recovered myself, I looked up with the deepest anxiety of soul. There was an expression of sadness in the depths of Berkeley's dark eyes, which I could not understand. I arose, — he also, and he took my hands in his.

"We will settle it in a very few words, Mary. You may either withdraw your question, and let the matter be forgotten; or, if you will, I will answer it, after which you and I are strangers."

"Why so, Dan?"

"I can give no reasons. It *will* be so. Which will you have, — your answer, or your friend?"

"My answer, Dan, — any thing but this dreadful uncertainty, — yet you mistake in supposing that your answer, whatever it be, will produce any estrangement between us."

Dan laughed, shortly. "Don't stand with that downcast air, — hold up your head, and look me in the eyes," he said. I obeyed, and he continued: "Of the charge which you bring indirectly against me, I am —— *not* guilty. You see before you a slandered and innocent being, — innocent as the babe unborn, or the sheep unshorn, whichever is the fashionable simile."

"You deny it!" I exclaimed, as he dropped my hands. "Thank Heaven."

"Yes, I deny it, Miss Brandegee; so go on to thank Heaven all day, if you will."

"Miss Brandegee!" I repeated, as Dan turned away. "Is our friendship then ended? O Dan, if you knew what I would give that I had not distrusted your infallible honor, — that I had not asked the question!"

"For a little piece of advice which you may remember, as it is probably the last which I ever shall give you, never ask any man living such a question again, not even your own husband, — though, of course, you will only marry a sort of St. Ambrose, who never has looked at a woman."

"I beg your pardon for my suspicions," said I; "I trust you entirely."

"The devil is in it if you don't, now that my word is given," said Dan, with an air of haughtiness that cut me to the soul.

"And because you have justified yourself to me, do you withdraw your friendship, Dan?"

"I withdraw nothing that Miss Brandegee sees fit to retain," said Berkeley, with a distant bow; "I am under her commands."

"Yet you said we must be strangers."

He did not reply; and, wounded by the icy coldness of his look and manner, I would not have protracted the discussion, even if the entrance of Mrs. Berkeley and her daughters had not deprived me of the opportunity.

On my return upstairs, I found Hinda awaiting me in my room, and noticing the dejection of my air, she inquired what the matter was. I had no sooner told her, than she cried out immediately, that it could not be possible I had been so crazy as to put such a question to Dan Berkeley.

"Why, Hinda, you advised me to yourself!" I cried, with indignation.

"But I did not imagine you would be such a goose, Mary! I was speaking ironically. For Heaven's sake don't tell Mrs. Berkeley, or she would recommend you to the Insane Retreat."

Entirely out of patience with Hinda, I made ready for church in haste. As I descended, Mrs. Berkeley, who was not going, called me into her room, to entertain me with complaints of Judith; who, she alleged, was the most unreasonable and ungrateful being in the universe. Did any one ever have such a cursed set of children from the oldest to the youngest? Kassie had proved a vile, abandoned woman, — Jack ran away to sea at fourteen, — George had gone to England without telling her, — the three youngest children were plain as hedge-fences, — Gov. was as obstinate as a mule. The step-sons were worse. Jeff was a brute, Nick a rascal, and Dan a devil. She had not yet recovered from this business of Rosanna's.

I was just moving off when this remark detained me. "Aunt Judith," I said, "I wish you would tell me how you *know* that."

"That does seem to agitate you wonderfully!" said Mrs. Berkeley. "I suppose you will be bothering about it incessantly till I tell you. Why, if you must know, I had four nigger-girls, — I wanted to sell them all this winter, — I could not get along without it, and Rosanna and Zanfretta would have brought two thousand dollars apiece. I ordered the sale about the time you came here, and M'Glinchey writes that Zanfretta has run away, and Rosanna is unfit for sale."

"M'Glinchey," I cried, "what, the overseer! O Aunt Judith! and you have condemned my cousin Dan on testimony such as this! I do not believe it; he is indeed innocent!"

"Do not make me angry, Mary, by such silly assertions," said Mrs. Berkeley; "I do not state a fact without foundation for it. Now, then, you see that takes away four thousand dollars at a

sweep, and the General's finances are very tight this year, — the tobacco crop fell far below the average, and I depended on the sale of those niggers largely for pocket-money. Judith must be married, and her wedding expenses must be paid."

"You will have four thousand more," said I, "from the sale of the two negroes remaining."

"No I won't; they are not as handsome as Rosanna and Zanfretta; they cannot bring more than a thousand apiece."

"Can't they pick cotton just as well as if they were handsome?" I asked, in surprise.

"Pick cotton! you simpleton! Who said any thing about cotton?" asked Mrs. Berkeley, bursting into a laugh. "That's a good joke! What man in his senses, do you suppose, would pay two thousand dollars for a girl fifteen years old to pick cotton!"

I stood utterly aghast, at the door. "Why, Aunt Judith," I exclaimed, in rising indignation, "could *you* sell them for any thing else!"

"I don't sell them for any thing, child; I get all the money I can. I want it."

"And you can do that!" I cried, "after all your talk about Dan's immorality! How can you, with a woman's soul, consent to such a sale, or touch a penny of the money? Don't buy me any dresses this winter, Aunt Judith, or make me any presents. I would go in rags rather than wear a thing you give me; and if I were Judith I should think a marriage cursed whose expenses are paid by such means."

Mrs. Berkeley started up, — I think with the intention of boxing my ears, — but I was through the door and down the staircase before her benevolent design could be carried into execution. Before I had reached the front door she called to me, from the head of the staircase, to wait, and I stopped obediently, though my heart still throbbed with indignation.

"Listen a minute, you little vixen," she said, "and exercise your reason. Don't you see it makes no difference? Don't you see that these wretches will buy other people's niggers if they don't buy mine? and when they are sold I am not responsible *then*, — I wash my hands of it *then*."

"And Pontius Pilate washed his hands," I cried, "of a sin that left on his soul a stain which no ablutions could efface! You are as responsible for what you can prevent, as for what you commit! You would shrink from taking the price of blood, and God knows this is worse."

Mrs. Berkeley laughed, called me a fool, and returned to her room. As I perceived that Hervey and Dan were putting on their overcoats in the hall, I allowed them to leave the house first, and they walked before me for some distance at an interval of nearly a block. My thoughts were chiefly engrossed with my late audacity, and its provocation. Never had I so spoken to my aunt before, and I was surprised to perceive the effect which my frankness had produced. I could not have kept silent had she killed me; but I was pained to perceive that her strictures on Dan had all been called forth by such a motive. It was the loss of the money — not a virtuous horror — that had aroused her indignation. As for Dan, he only wanted wings to make him an angel in my estimation. When we have been accustomed to associate the idea of vice with a person to whom we are attached, however startling it may have seemed at first, yet we become so familiarized with the thought, that when the stigma is removed, all the old excellences shine forth with tenfold lustre. That day's experience revealed to me all my latent affection for Dan Berkeley; and, coupled with it, was a keen sorrow that I had made him acquainted with my suspicions. Oh, had I only endured my perplexing doubts! how much better than to have lost his friendship! I might yet regain it! His manner, when next we met, should satisfy me.

Alas! though it decided, yet satisfy me it did not. Dan's behavior to me was replete with all the cold politeness of a stranger; and when, in the attempt to conceal how much it wounded me, I endeavored to converse, I found the icy gaiety of his manners worse than the most uncomplimentary indifference. I had the common sense to leave things to take care of themselves, for no apology could make the matter any better; consequently, when the next few days had passed with the interchange of only the most common-place civilities, I grew careless and reconciled to the present state of affairs.

On the day following this unhappy Sunday, Hinda, who seemed in a state bordering on distraction, came to my room to ask me to go out and get a short piece of pinking done for her, at a store where she was in the habit of dealing. The day was cloudy, — she had a bad cold, — and could not go herself, and the flounce must be sewed on that day, for it was the morning of Mrs. Berkeley's weekly soireé. I declined, but Hinda's urgency increased. "Dear Mary" was for some time solicited in vain. At last a final argument was advanced. "I have a tell for you, Mary. If it is worth hearing, will you go?"

"Tells are so flat," I answered.

Hinda was sure I would not find *this* tell flat, — it was something Dan had said. He avowed to Hervey that he thought me possessed of the utmost sweetness of character, combined with unflinching honor, — that he knew of my having shielded another person from blame of the most annoying kind, and he never could think otherwise than well of me hereafter. I asked earnestly if it was the truth. Hinda assured me so solemnly that it was, that I could not disbelieve her; and though, alas! Dan had said it on Saturday evening instead of Sunday, my weak point was successfully assailed. Hinda asked if I did not think that "tell" worth a walk down Broadway, and I did not deny that I thought it worth a walk from Central Park to the Battery. I consented to go, and near the middle of the day found myself seated in the store which she had designated, awaiting the slow operations of the pinker. In the mean time, it looked very much like rain. I was at some distance down town, and in accordance with Hinda's advice, I had worn my best bonnet. It was a fearful complication of disasters, and I sat looking alternately through the windows at the signs of the skies, and then again at the counter before me, whereon a great variety of articles were scattered.

Before I had been long in my present position, a young man, who for some time after my entrance had been dabbling in purchases at the back counters, came forward to the front of the store. He had a tall and slender figure; a very expressive countenance, and bright, black eyes; but with an assurance of manner that I did not fancy. He gave me one look as he passed, walked to the door, and after standing there a minute, he retraced his steps to the place where I was seated, and leaning his back against the counter, said, after a slight salutation, "How is Miss Hinda to-day?"

I looked up in amazement, and answered mechanically, "Very well, thank you."

"Take her a note from her uncle?" said he, drawing a billet from his waistcoat pocket.

"From whom?" said I.

"Her Uncle Peter," rejoined the stranger, — "very sick, and has written her this letter."

"She has no Uncle Peter," said I; "and I cannot be responsible for letters from strangers." I bowed, and drew slightly away. The young man went again to the door, where he stood, with a patience akin to that of Job, for the next hour; at the

end of which time, my parcel of ribands was made up, and I came to the door. On reaching it, I found, to my consternation, that it was raining fast.

"Let me put you in an omnibus?" said the young gentleman, who appeared to enjoy my perplexity. I declined the offer, for how did I know that he would not get in with me? I ran through the rain to the next sidewalk, where I stood under an awning, that, wonderful to relate, had not been drawn up, and made up my mind to patronize ever, thereafter, a store that was so liberal of its canvas. I awaited an omnibus for some time; but every one was full, owing to the fact, that other people had seized on their chances for riding long before my errand would permit me. In the mean time, I descried my late officious interlocutor coming out of an umbrella store, where it was evident he had lately made an investment of a dollar.

"I took the precaution to bring an umbrella with me to-day," he said, coming up to my side, and raising his recent purchase over my head. "If it can be of service to you, I shall be most happy."

I did not exactly know how to refuse so polite an offer. My bonnet was new, and very pretty, — it would be a pity to spoil it; — beside, I reflected that my route lay through streets as public as any in the city; — if the young man's behavior was at all unseemly, it would be a very easy matter to get rid of him, and we proceeded together. I did not, however, "have much conversation," as black Christian would say; and from the few words that were exchanged, I found that Hinda had managed to conceal, in her correspondence, more than I had thought possible; for he knew neither her last name, nor her residence. At last, recollecting that by allowing him to accompany me the whole distance, I would divulge more than was advisable, I said that it did not rain any now; that I was obliged to him for his umbrella; and would bid him good-morning. He said that it was pouring still; that since I was tired of his company, I might have his umbrella; then, begging me to deliver to the fair Miss Hinda just that one letter from her dying Uncle Peter, he put it in my hand, stopped an omnibus going down, and was in it immediately; and after making sure that it did not stop, so far as I could see it, I came home through a side street. My determination was taken of going on no more errands for Hinda, though I could not well avoid taking charge of this letter.

Vain, however, were the censures with which I accompanied this piece of honesty. Hinda only laughed, and went into tran-

sports over the letter. "Oh, the splendid fellow," she cried. "How did he look? What did he say?"

I cut her short by rebuking her for breaking her solemn promise to me, and for having corresponded so long with a stranger through the medium of her sewing woman. I then said, that I could not be made the bearer of any more such despatches; that she need appoint no more meetings for me at stores with young gentlemen; and I advised her, earnestly, to break off so dangerous an intimacy, while yet she had the power.

"But I like him, Mary; I cannot break off the acquaintance. He is extremely fascinating and agreeable."

"You have met him again, then, Hinda?"

This she would neither acknowledge nor deny. I proceeded:

"If you do not wish to break off the acquaintance, your best course is to tell him frankly who you are, ask his name, suggest to him to procure an introduction to General, or Mrs. Berkeley, and make your acquaintance in a legitimate way. That will be far better than to carry on such improper correspondence. If he has no title for such an introduction, he is not worthy your acquaintance."

I proceeded to preach, as she called it, for the next half hour, producing no more impression than if she had been a stone. She sat down immediately to write a letter, and scribbled away, copying and recopying, all the afternoon.

The next morning, as Mrs. Berkeley and Judith were not on speaking terms, — there having been a fracas between them the night before the soireé, — the mother of the family rode off in her carriage alone, and Judith, making up in her party Livy and Gatty, went out to prosecute the preparations for her wedding, appointing a meeting with Hinda and me at a daguerrean gallery down Broadway. Knowing that there had been no time this day for Hinda to lay any schemes with her admiring hero, I accompanied her without any scruple, and, shortly after the departure of the other three damsels, we set out together.

Hinda occupied the first stages of the promenade by a discussion of her hopes and fears regarding her unknown correspondent, — speculations as to Dan's motives in having paid assiduous attentions to a wealthy young lady all the past winter, — reflections on the amount of money which it cost that gentleman to support his horses, — doubts as to the practicability of her making a decent match, as all her admirers were poor, and expression of her positive conviction that a pretty face was the only recommendation she possessed.

"Goodness, Mary! did you see that young man take off his hat to us as he passed, — walk faster, — he is following us!" In vain I remonstrated. Hinda was quite sure. "Didn't I tell you, Mary! there, he has gone up on the steps of a house to watch."

"You are quite mistaken, I responded. "He took off his hat to look for something in it, did not find it, and turned to go back. That is the house he came out of, you see he has let himself in."

Hinda's dissatisfaction was developed during her discourse.

"What ails Broadway this morning?" she continued. "I vow I haven't seen a passable man since we set out. I never beheld such a set of scarecrows. That individual who has walked on the opposite side of the way from Twentieth street would be quite gorgeous if he did not twirl a cane, — a cane is a sure sign of a fop. This one coming would be decent, but he wears a shawl, and looks as flat as a pancake. Just imagine Dan Berkeley done up in a shawl, and whisking a cane. How ludicrous! ha! ha! Here comes a very fine-looking individual with a black moustache, — but then he looks at you, and not at me. Pshaw! I shall discuss no more. When I compare them with my friend G. B., they make me ill. By the way, I must stop at the next mail-box, and put in my letter. How I am to get the answer, I don't know. That seamstress left town on Saturday, and it bothered me; I have told him not to write till he hears from me again."

Hinda and I separated soon after, and I proceeded to the daguerrean gallery, where I found Judith with her sister and Livy, and — as I had not expected — Lionel Hervey. They were all engaged in looking at a picture in the second room; the place was well filled with visitors, and I had been there but a few minutes when I perceived the so-styled "G. B." descending from an upper apartment in company with a gentleman but little older and graver in appearance than himself. As they moved around the room, looking over the portraits, the young gentleman's eye fell on our party. Remembering that I had walked nine or ten blocks in his company the day before on Broadway, I judged, perhaps too hastily, that I could not withhold a recognition. I bent my head coldly, — he returned the salutation in a quiet way, and passed on. My hesitation had not escaped the notice of all the company, as I became conscious, when Lionel Hervey, speaking in a subdued tone, put the question:

"Do you know that young man who bowed to you?"

I was about to answer yes, but I reflected that I might possibly be asked his name, which I was not qualified to give. Hinda

might have thought of some equivocation to the effect that she had met him at a party but could not recall his name, but as I was too unused to impromptu deceptions, I looked up and replied by saying, "Do you know him yourself, Mr. Hervey?"

"By sight only," he answered, — and then added, "he is one of the wildest rakes about town."

Whether Mr. Hervey intended this gratuitous information to conduce to my comfort, or to improve my discretion, is questionable. He left it to have its effect, and said no more; nor did I dare to put any further question, which, indeed, would have cost me some trouble, as Judith next monopolized his attention. Whether the unknown young gentleman had recognized Hervey or not, I could not determine. When I met Hinda, at home, I repeated to her Hervey's remark, which made her look extremely grave; and, as I went on to demonstrate to her the fearful extent to which she was compromising herself, she was at last prevailed on by my earnest solicitations, and promised not to write to her unknown admirer any more.

A few days after, there was a small party at the Bourdlémes — a family which had long been on terms of friendship with the Berkeleys, — to which we were all invited. Dan was our escort. As Hervey had an engagement with Mr. Anderson, he did not accompany us. I had as pleasant a time as was possible, seeing that Dan did not look at me once throughout the whole evening. We reached home about twelve o'clock. Hinda, who was very ill, went directly to her room. While the others were discussing the party in the parlor, Hervey came up to me, as I stood a little aside at a table, and took out a note, which he gave me. It bore the superscription "Hinda," with the address of the Andersons house in Fifth Avenue. I looked up inquiringly at Hervey, who, in a low tone, explained that he had received it that evening from Miss Phebe Anderson, who had sent a rather uncivil message to Miss Hinda. I said very little in answer, and as, when I went upstairs, I found Hinda fast asleep, I decided to wait till the next day. As soon as I arose, I hastened to her room.

"Would you like an excitement this morning, Hinda?" I asked, a little maliciously. Hinda was ill, and evidently in a great deal of pain, physically, to which the arrival of the note and Miss Anderson's message — a little exaggerated, I confess — added mental suffering. I advised her to lie still and not to trouble herself, or think of writing to G. B. any more, and he would tire of writing to her without response.

Late in the afternoon Hinda sent for me. She was quite weak

and sick, had kept her bed all day, and vowed she had thought of nothing but her present scrape since morning. "Mary," she said, "I must positively write him a line and tell him not to send me another letter. If this should happen again, the Andersons would send the letter to Mrs. Berkeley."

"Very well, you might do that," said I.

"But how am I fit to write? I cannot hold up my head. Get my little desk and do it for me, — I will dictate."

I refused, impelled by an imperative instinct. Hinda wept for some time, in vain. "You do not treat me well at all," she cried, "seeing that through you he knows my name."

"Through me, Hinda?"

"Why, yes, I corresponded with him under the name of Laura Ashton until I quarrelled with the seamstress."

"You said she had left town."

"No, I quarrelled with her. Then I had to send you to the store to get the next letter, and I was obliged to tell him what store you would be at, and what my Christian name is. Now that I have not seen him since Monday, nor written, he sent this note to the Andersons as a forlorn hope, supposing that they only knew one person with such a name."

"I do not see how it is my fault," said I.

"Yes it is, Mary, — you should have acted as though it was not my real name, or some such thing as that. Now, then, I am half wild. Do write a note for me! I would do it in a minute for you."

I could not refuse; so I sat down, and wrote at Hinda's dictation a note, which, before it was finished, had become a good-sized letter. "Shall I sign it Hinda," I asked, "or Laura Ashton?"

"Oh, not Hinda; sign it Laura, — I never signed a letter to him Hinda, in the world."

When the letter was enveloped and directed, Hinda asked me to send Reynolds with it to the corner. I preferred to take it myself, however, as I did not like to have it passed through any more hands than necessary. It was getting toward evening, and I hurried off. On the corner of the street I met Lionel Hervey and Dan Berkeley together.

"You are out late, Miss Brandegee," said the latter. I agreed that I was, seeing that the lamps were just being lighted, and mentioned that I came to post a letter. I reached up precipitately to the box, but my haste embarrassed me, and by an unlucky accident, the letter fell as I lifted the narrow iron lid. Berkeley picked it up, covered with mud.

"Will you change the envelope?" said he, at the same time that I cried out, "O Dan, don't look at the direction!"

The injunction came too late. Berkeley's glance had fallen on the address, and a cold chill ran through my frame. Dan held the letter behind him for one moment, while his eyes were fixed upon my face with a look I never can forget. A low laugh broke from his lips, and, with the words, "Tell it not among the saints! All the world's a lie, and *all* the men and women liars," he gave me the letter, and went on.

Hervey had not followed. I looked up in anguish of soul, and exclaimed, "Oh, what can he think!"

"Why do you not explain?" said Hervey.

I replied that I should not justify myself, pushed the letter, mud-bespattered as it was, into the box, and hurried home with Hervey. On hearing the account of my adventures, Hinda was in a great state of alarm, very sorry that I was obliged to suffer for her sake, and declared herself to be incredibly indebted to me.

The week passed away. On the evening of the following Monday, when I came to dinner, I perceived by the sound of voices before entering the dining-room, and by the excitement manifested by all the party after I had joined it, that something unusual was under discussion. Every one seemed surprised by my ignorance. "Why, haven't you heard?" cried Gatty, "it's the Brancton divorce case, — opens to-morrow."

"I hope Dan has nothing to do with it!" said Judith, who had followed me into the room.

Nothing but to get into all the trouble he could, Mrs. Berkeley said. The fact was, Mrs. Brancton had behaved in a most unwarrantable manner. Mr. Brancton had been in Europe for several months. On his return, which took place a short time before, he discovered that his wife had conducted herself in a way that savored of the infernal regions. During his absence Mrs. Brancton had sold three houses and spent all the money, — all his property that she had been able to get under her own control had vanished in like manner; and she was in debt to an amount which all the money which her husband had put beyond her reach would be insufficient to cover. Moreover, she had quarrelled with all her husband's relations, forbidden his sister the house, and nearly starved his two children to death. As for Dan, it did seem that Satan had possessed him to meddle with it.

As Berkeley came in, the subject was dropped. Some desultory conversation arose soon, after which Reynolds brought in

three letters which he laid before Dan, who looked them over, then scrutinized the address of one attentively.

"Mrs. Dan Berkeley," he said, "I don't know who *she* is. Hinda, you may open it." He handed the letter to the young lady at his right, who tore off the envelope, and displayed a folded advertisement.

"Cooking-stoves it is! Dear Madam, we respectfully solicit your patronage for our improved system of patent ranges." Hinda proceeded to read off the enumeration of the good qualities of these remarkable stoves, which were warranted to require but three minutes to heat, consumed a small amount of fuel, and would accommodate any number of utensils. Dan sat looking at the other letters with a gloomy brow, and as soon as Hinda had finished, he opened one. In answer to Mrs. Berkeley's inquiry whom it was from, he replied, that it was a subpœna to appear as witness on the trial of a case the following day.

"And what's the other?"

Dan did not reply; and so much was I occupied in thinking about the subpœna, that I did not attribute the feverish gleam with which Hinda's eyes were sparkling, to any other reason than a similar consideration. As this incident furnished an opening, Mrs. Berkeley resumed the subject of Mrs. Brancton by saying that she thought Dan's course very undignified in not letting the matter alone.

Dan said he should let it alone, in all probability.

"It looks very much like it!" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley, "when you have been riding about with her to see lawyers and witnesses all last week, and were at her house all day on Sunday."

"I don't know what the devil you mean by that," said Dan, with some irritation. "I did not see Mrs. Brancton last week, excepting once when we met at Everett's office; and I called on Sunday to leave a paper. I will say, however, if you expect me to desert a friend because she is in trouble, or because half the world choose to vilify her, you will be disappointed. Mrs. Brancton is not an angel, — I never said she was, — but she is a very much injured woman. I have offered my services, and it is my intention to stand by her if I make all her enemies my own."

"Spent her husband's money and starved her step-sons almost to death."

"Humph!" ejaculated Dan, "*you* can't throw stones at her on the question of ill-treating her step-children."

Mrs. Berkeley said she could not conceive what he meant. She had been more than a mother to *her* husband's children;

but if Mrs. Brancton had had such little devils to deal with as the General was encumbered with when she married him, she could not wonder at any method to which she (Mrs. Brancton) had resorted for correction. The discussion was kept up with some spirit. As soon as dinner was over, Hinda made a sign for me to follow her upstairs. I found her in her own apartment, in a terrible state of excitement. "O heavens, Mary!" she cried, "*what* will he do!"

"Do?—about the subpœna? Why,—go, I suppose."

"O you jack! Subpœna! What do I care about *that*? No,—the other letter,—it's to me,—from G. B."

"Indeed, Hinda, you must be mistaken. Dan believes it is I who carry on that correspondence, and he did not even look at me when he read the direction."

"Mary, you get worse and worse. Look at you! Don't you suppose he has more presence of mind, with Mrs. Berkeley opposite! Don't make me doubt the evidence of my senses. Didn't I see Laura Ashton in the blackest of ink, in the handwriting of my unknown hero, and underneath it, 'Care of D. H. Berkeley, Esq.,' scrawled in the hand of that low-lived, paltry seamstress! It all comes of my not having told him why he must not write through her."

"You deserve it," I could not resist saying. "How will you get the letter?"

"I don't know, that's just what troubles me. If Dan were not so full of this Brancton business, I should have no hope at all. Thank Heaven that it fell into his hands, instead of Mrs. Berkeley's. Confound that disagreeable animal of a seamstress."

Not sorry to escape these revilings, I hastened to my own room, where I have no doubt I slept throughout the watches of the night far more sweetly than Hinda. The next morning I arose early, and, as I came downstairs, I heard Dan tell Judith that he was going to breakfast at Mrs. Brancton's. I left the table before Hinda, and returning to my room, threw open the blinds to admit the fresh morning air, and leaned from the casement. It was the hour of nine: I remember listening to the bells as they rang it out, when I saw Dan come up the side-walk and enter the house. At the same minute Hinda rushed in.

"I declare this is worse than the Anderson business," she exclaimed. "Mary, dear Mary, run down now and get the letter from Dan."

"Go yourself, Hinda."

"You are absolutely cruel! How can I go myself? What have you to fear in just asking Dan for a letter? If he thinks the letter is for you, asking for it cannot make matters worse."

Her fruitless importunity was interrupted by Jarvis, who came to the door with a letter, superscribed with my name in Dan's handwriting. I tore off the envelope, and, as I expected, found it to enclose the letter addressed to Laura Ashton.

"Stop, Jarvis!" I called, and following him into the hall I gave him the letter, and bade him take it back to Mr. Berkeley.

"Wait, Jarvis," exclaimed Hinda; "Miss Brandegee does not know what she wants. Give me the letter!" She took it, and added — slipping a silver coin into his hand — "Now don't go near Mr. Berkeley again, and if he asks you where the letter is, say you delivered it."

I could not resist laughing at this piece of cool audacity. "You think this the end of it," I said. "I am going down to explain to Dan."

"If you betray me, I shall think you very shabby," said Hinda.

"I shall *not* act shabbily," I answered; "and what you think does not signify."

I came down. Dan was writing in the library. He was evidently very busy, and in haste. I hesitated only for one moment, however. Coming up to the table at which he was seated, I said:

"Mr. Berkeley, the letter which you sent up to me, I sent back by Jarvis."

To this Dan replied merely, "Indeed."

"Have you received it?"

"No."

"I wish you would ask him if I did not give it back to him."

Dan looked up. "Ask *Jarvis*, Miss Brandegee, to confirm your assertions."

"No, — ask him if he obeyed my orders."

"That is not my affair," he replied. "As you seem to wish me to suppose that the letter was not for you, will you say for whom it *was* intended."

"I shall not tell you," I answered.

"Very well, then; I have nothing more to do with it," said Dan. The emphasis of his distant manner effectually silenced me. I saw the conclusion that he had drawn, and my pride repressed even the wish to set him right.

Hinda was awaiting me anxiously, and while I sat enlarging

upon my keen distress at Dan's opinion of me, she perused the letter with the utmost delight, and speculated on her best course to pursue. "How in the world can I get his letters hereafter?" said she. "This correspondence is too pleasing to be given up. Mary, let the letters come under cover to you."

"No, I declare you shall not, Hinda. There is a point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. I have suffered enough this morning, in the style of Dan's manners, to make me sick of your intrigues."

"Dan's a great humbug," answered Hinda; "a regular Southern sham. He and I have dissolved partnership."

"Well, a truce to Dan," said I; "I'm not going to be made a cat's-paw of any longer. As surely as a letter comes to me for you, so surely I shall send it back without letting you know it at all."

"Really, you are getting quite savage. Well, as the seamstress is such a spiteful wretch, and you are so disagreeable, owing to the prudishness of the virtuous prince Dan, I must resort to some other expedient; I must take a box at the post-office, or some such thing as that."

"Why, Hinda! of what are you thinking! Ask for letters at a public office!"

"You'll go with me sometimes. I shall write to G. B. to-day, and tell him to direct to the box."

"I shall not go with you at all, and as for the box, I advise you to discover first whether you can have one, before you instruct people to direct to it."

"So I shall, Mary; 'tis a wise suggestion. I'll act on it to-day. I shall not meet any of the ladies very far down town, and as Dan has gone to court, he is fast for six hours at least."

I did not offer a single syllable of remonstrance. Hinda returned just before dinner, and, as I expected, came directly to my room.

"You have been box-hunting?" said I.

"Yes, my dear. I dropped a note this morning to G. B., telling him to wait till I could get a box, and as I thought the New York General Post-office would not be eligible, as I should meet some one I know every time I were to go there for a letter, I started to go down to Fulton street on foot."

"Fulton street! what for?"

"Why, to the Herald office, child, — that is in Fulton street. Don't ask questions any more till I am through. I had to go up

Fifth Avenue first, a little way; and, as I came back, whom should I see but Lionel Hervey coming down Broadway. I hoped he would not see me, but he met me on the corner by the hotel, and joined me as far as the corner of Prince street, where, to my joy, he left me. I kept down Broadway steadily, and passed the corner of Fulton, for I had a nervous dread that the road was not quite clear, and that I would do well to reconnoitre first. I turned again at John street, came up, and passed Fulton again, and whom should I meet just then, in front of the City Hall, but Hervey coming down. He stopped a moment to ask if I was going home directly, and I said yes. I waited till he was well down Broadway, then I turned a third time to go back to Fulton street. The policeman had taken me across twice already, and I was very glad that I should not find it necessary to tax him the third time in the course of fifteen minutes; I turned down Fulton, and almost ran till I reached the Herald office.

"There was a crowd around the front entrance, so I went to a door further back, on a side street, and went in. I was so confused that I could see nothing, at first, till a very gorgeous specimen of a clerk stepped up to a sort of cage on the counter, and asked what I wanted."

"You saw *him*, I suppose."

"Oh, yes, and he looked at me very admiringly, as though wondering whether I knew what I was about."

"Perhaps he thought you wanted to advertise for a husband."

"Perhaps he did, — the girls used to do it at boarding-school, — but it's not much of an excitement, — you get such pesky letters. Well, to come back to the Herald office; — in a great deal of trepidation, for I discovered by this time that there was no sign of a woman anywhere near, I began to stammer, and when I had said 'I want' five times over, the clerk assisted me by asking if I wanted to advertise.

"I managed to say that I wanted a box. He said every box in the office was taken. Then I said I would like to inquire the price of a small one, for I thought that if it was only a few shillings I could out-bid the man who owned it, or buy it, or some such thing as that. He said they were all about the same size; and when I repeated my question, he told me a price that fairly took away my breath. I shrieked out that it was impossible, rushed out of the office by the front door, and, Mary, — on the steps was that everlasting Hervey! I would rather have seen the devil.

"'Miss Wriothesley!' he exclaimed, 'at the Herald office!' 'Yes,' I said, 'Mrs. Berkeley wanted a cook, and I advertised for her.' '*Mrs. Berkeley*,' he repeated, 'did she send you here? Of what was she thinking? Why could not she have sent by Dan or me?' I saw it would not do to let that assertion go, and I said the truth was, she had not sent me, but that I came on my own account to get the back numbers of the paper through last week. Hervey asked if I would allow him to look at last Wednesday's number, and I said I was not able to obtain what I came for. *That* was true, if nothing else was. Hervey looked incredulous enough, uncivil fellow! — and as for me, I talked like a fool all the while till the omnibus came, when he put me in, and I rode right up. One of the horses fell down near Nineteenth street, and as I was so near home, I jumped out. It was well I did, for I met Miss Phebe Anderson just on the corner of Twentieth street, — there had been another letter sent to their house, directed to 'Hinda,' she had it with her, and she told me for pity's sake to stop having the letters come there, for her sister, that horrid old maid, raised a great ado over this one, and said she should send the next to Mrs. Berkeley. It was all Phebe could do to dissuade her; then I rushed right home to read the letter."

"What is the reason that he will direct to the Andersons, Hinda?"

"The matter is, my dear, that he does not get my letters, because I do not write. The last letter was the one you wrote last week, — that is, the last till this morning, which was only a line to mention the box. I suppose he thinks I live at the Andersons. He has an idea that the letters are intercepted, and has given me a new address — Petrarch Hawley — at another office."

The discourse here was brought to a termination, and there was on my part no little regret that Hinda still regarded the correspondence with such complacency. I saw scarcely any thing of her till the following Thursday. I was seated alone by the front parlor window on the afternoon of that day. The sky was overcast, and my mind was in a corresponding state of gloom. I held a book in my hand, but could not fix my attention on the pages; and just as I was beginning to feel some interest in the subject, I was distracted by the sound of a step on the staircase. Mrs. Berkeley was out of town, and none of the young ladies, except Hinda, were at home; beside, this was a manly step, and, as I knew Dan was at court, I was, for a second, at a loss, until I perceived, through the open parlor door, that Lionel Hervey

had descended to the hall. While he was putting on his overcoat at the hat-stand, I caught a glimpse of a servant in livery coming up the steps, but there was no ring, for Hervey opened the front door before the man had time to pull the bell.

"Good afthernoon, Misther Hervey, an' long life to yer honor; an' it's Miss Andherson is afther sendin' me round wid a letther for Mrs. Berkeley."

"Mrs. Berkeley is out of town, Patrick," said Hervey. "She won't be in till to-morrow. Can't you leave the letter?"

"Wid yer honor? af coorse; but it is impoortant, an' not to be left wid any but Mrs. Berkeley, an' wid none of the young ladies barring Mr. Dan."

I heard the front door close, — the man went down the steps, and Hervey walked into the parlor.

"Miss Brandegee!"

"Well, sir," I said, with a coldness that always distinguished my tone when speaking to Hervey.

"Another little billet-doux for Miss Hinda. Will you deliver it?"

I held out my hand, and Hervey brought me the note. It was addressed "Miss Hinda, No. ——, Fifth Avenue," in the hand of the persevering G. B., and across it, in the hand of Miss Anderson, written with a pencil, were the words, — "To be opened by Mrs. Jefferson L. Berkeley."

"I think that is mean!" I exclaimed. "Miss Anderson should see Hinda herself, or send the letter back to the post-office. And you, Mr. Hervey, — you are responsible for this letter. Suppose they ask you about it? You will say that you gave it to me, I suppose!"

"I shall say that the letter was directed to Miss Hinda, and I sent it to her, without regard to pencil-marks," answered Hervey.

He left the house, and I ran upstairs to Hinda's room, where I found her in the midst of an elaborate arrangement of her coiffure, singing as merrily as a lark.

"Here's an excitement, Hinda, which you appear not to anticipate," I said; and I produced the letter, explaining in a very few words the circumstances of its arrival.

"Oh, horrors! I can't read it, — if I let go this braid it will all be loose, — just hold it, Mary, till I wash the pomade off my hands. Don't let it slip, — it never looked so well, — and I've spent an hour on it, if I have a minute. Miss Anderson should have her neck wrung. Heaven preserve me from being an old

maid, if I must resemble her. And Lionel Hervey is a jewel! Give me the letter."

Hinda opened the letter with trembling fingers, and sat down by the window to read it, while I leaned on the back of her chair, holding her hair in my hand. The letter was not satisfactory, as I perceived by the crimson color that rose to her temples on the perusal. G. B. was indignant at not having heard from Miss Hinda in eight days; and then, only to receive a line saying that he must not write until the young lady obtained a box at the post-office, was beyond his patience. He was not accustomed to being trifled with in that way. As for Hinda, he loved her to distraction; if he adored her less he might exercise more calmness, but no interviews and no letters were what he could not endure, and he must insist on one or both, or know his fate decidedly. The letter concluded with remarks on the cruel sports of which he would no longer be the victim, and should he ever discover that there was another in Miss Hinda's toils, he (G. B.) in charity would give him a warning.

Hinda was highly incensed at what she pronounced so "confoundedly saucy a letter." I advised her to take no notice of it, and renounce him. Hinda said she would indeed renounce him, but she would have the satisfaction of telling him what she thought of him first. In accordance therewith, Hinda wrote a letter three pages in length, which she submitted to my inspection, and I thought it was quite sufficient to annihilate any lover who was in earnest. She pronounced it very dishonorable in him to use a name which she had only given him to serve one occasion, in a manner that compromised her to such an extent; made many remarks on his impudence and conceit; and concluded with the admonition that if he presumed to send her another letter it should go back unopened.

As this task was concluded, she drew a long breath, said that she would mail the letter the next morning, and he would probably receive it at night, and then she announced that she had a favor to request of me. This favor was that I would ask Mr. Hervey the name of the young man who bowed to me in the daguerrean gallery. Hinda thought it would be such a triumph to send back his letters addressed to his own true name, — it would puzzle him vastly. I replied that to this there were two objections. In the first place, G. B. would only be exasperated to taking any measures to discover her name, and in the second, I never spoke to Mr. Hervey except when I could not avoid it.

Hinda proceeded to lecture me on my rudeness to Hervey.

She noticed that during the preceding evenings, whenever he asked me for a favorite air, I would either say I did not wish to play, or perform it in a horrid, slovenly manner; and twice when he entered the room I had risen from the piano. I said that he never had asked me to play but twice, once I had a bad headache and played ill, and the second time I had not sufficient spirit to enable me to execute any piece whatever. I acknowledged that I did not like Mr. Hervey for many reasons, one of which was the indelicacy and unmanliness of his accepting the hospitality of this house when every one knew him to be Judith Berkeley's rejected lover.

Hinda said, with a laugh, that she could entirely clear Mr. Hervey's fair fame from the imputation. It was a case of eavesdropping, which made her more reluctant to admit it, but she could not bear that any injustice should be done Mr. Hervey. One day, when no one was at home except Judith and herself, he had called, and Judith refused to allow Hinda to go down, but went below herself. Hinda wanted a glass of egg-nogg, and much preferring to make it herself, she went down to the dining-room to prepare it, and entered the closet. While she was there, there was a ring at the front door, and Judith led Hervey into the dining-room, and told Reynolds, when he came to answer the bell, to say that she was engaged. Of course, Hinda remained in the closet, and listened to a long and interesting discourse between Judith and Hervey. She learned thereby that Judith in reality much preferred Mr. Hervey to Captain Hunter. Hervey had said that, of course, his claim to her favor was entirely withdrawn now that another was her engaged husband. Judith then asked if he intended to accept Mrs. Berkeley's invitation to remain at their house while he stayed in town. Hervey said, "Certainly not." Judith then said, amid many tears, that she did not expect to be forsaken by him, and Hervey replied that she could not expect a man of ordinary spirit, to say nothing of feeling, to act in any other way. He supposed their positions reversed, and asked what she would say in case he should tell her that there need be no alteration in the terms of their intercourse, and suggest to her to come and visit his wife, and so on. Would she not receive the proposal with indignation, to say the least? No, Judith said; if she knew he loved her, and only fulfilled the other engagement because bound in honor, she would sink all scruples, waive all ceremonies, bury all pride, be his faithful and devoted friend to the latest day she lived, and serve him and his in every possible way. This assurance had a

strong effect on Hervey, and he immediately said that he should accept her mother's invitation, and would tell Dan so in the course of the day. Hinda added that Mr. Hervey was a man whom she admired greatly, and she thought he was behaving exactly right, and deported himself in the most noble and gentlemanly manner.

But I did not agree with her, and was forced to account for it by a suggestion formerly made by Livy, that Mr. Hervey never had loved Judith much at all, — that the extreme eligibility of the match had attracted him, and the refusal had not proved a shock so rude as to lead him to give up his connection with a family by whom he was held in such general favor.

The proceedings of the next day, Friday, were to end the Brancton trial. Each day, during its progress, Dan had gone down to the court-room, and dined with Mrs. Brancton. Mrs. Berkeley returned on Friday afternoon, and her complaints with regard to Dan were the chief subject of conversation. She defied us to remember a single evening since his arrival in town that had been spent at home, or any occasion when he was in, before the house had been shut up for the night. Mr. Hervey came directly from the court-room, where he had waited to hear the verdict. To the surprise of every one it had been returned in Mrs. Brancton's favor.

It struck me that Hinda did not appear in her usual spirits. That evening there was company, and the guests were not gone till twelve o'clock. The ladies remained up for some time, discussing the trial. Mrs. Berkeley said that Mrs. Brancton had but two witnesses of importance on her side, both of whom were gentlemen who had been her special cavaliers during the past summer, — Mr. Frank Bannister and Mr. Ramsay Jones; — that the latter had come into court so tipsy that he had been taken from the witness stand to the station house; and the former had contradicted himself fifteen times in the course of his testimony.

"Everybody says the jury was 'packed,'" said Judith, "if not, it was a set of stupid fools."

"How *can* Dan take her part!" said Gatty. "He is either greatly blinded, or a most faithful friend."

"Friend!" echoed Judith, "nonsense! he is utterly infatuated, — I believe that if she were divorced he would marry her."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Berkeley, in a low tone. Dan was at the door. He came to ask some question about a night-key, and I went to my room. I had been there but a few minutes when Mrs. Berkeley came in to inquire about the execution of some

commissions that I had attended to during her absence from town, and quitted the room. I had scarcely locked the door when it was beseiged for admittance by Hinda, who, with anxious countenance came to ask me what Mrs. Berkeley had been talking about. I satisfied her on that head, and, after expressing her opinion that Dan had bribed all the jury, and declaring that his sneers over the correspondence of G. B., alias Petrarch Hawlins, reminded her of Satan reproving sin, she withdrew. I had not locked the door a second time, when Mrs. Berkeley came to know what Hinda had been talking about. I said the subject had been Dan. Mrs. Berkeley bade me go to bed, and not let Hinda in again.

The next was Saturday morning. Everybody was late at breakfast, with the exception of Mrs. Berkeley and myself; consequently I left the table before the others had finished their repast. As I stood in my own room preparing for a walk, Hinda put in her head, and asked if she might enter. I was getting quite tired of the sight of her, but as I saw that there was a "tell" in prospect, I asked, in some curiosity, what it was.

"Why, my dear, the awfulest thing happened yesterday afternoon that you can possibly conceive," said Hinda, and she entered and seated herself, while she made her narration, her bright eyes enlarged to an unusual extent during its progress. The substance of the tale was, that shortly after I had left the house on the day before, Hinda had arrayed herself for an afternoon stroll on Broadway, and, as she came downstairs, she saw a letter lying on the hall table. She stopped to glance at the direction, and perceived, to her horror, that it was in a well-known handwriting, and was addressed to Dan Berkeley. Her eyes fairly swam. She had seen that hand too often to mistake it, — it was the writing of no less a person than G. B. himself, — Petrarch, — Lothario, — her unknown correspondent, — her despairing lover. The longer she looked at it the firmer grew conviction. All my warnings and arguments rushed like a flood over her understanding. She perceived that there were a thousand ways in which her outraged admirer could have found her out, — in fact, they all looked as clear as the path of the sun at noon-day. That letter might enclose revelations fatal to her peace! it might be dictated by treachery which left that of Iago far in the shade, and was, possibly, replete with more venom than the fangs of Cleopatra's aspic. Hinda's first impulse was to go to Dan Berkeley, take the letter, make a full confession of the whole, implore him to keep the secret, and throw herself on his generous pro-

tection. But then what a fool she would be making of herself if the letter were not in relation to her, but treating of another subject! Hinda's determination was taken to open it.

Resolution was soon followed by execution. The letter was not sealed, merely fastened with gum-Arabic. Hinda recollected that there was no member of the family at home except herself. Hervey had gone out in the morning, — Livy, Judith, and Gatty had left just before me, — Mrs. Berkeley was out of town, and Dan at the court-room. A few drops of water would suffice to soften the flap of the envelope, but it would take nearly an hour before she could open without danger of tearing the letter. Hinda threw off her cloak and bonnet, and ran down to the kitchen. She was taken sick and wanted tea, or rather a small tea-kettle, and, declining the assistance of the servants, carried the tea-kettle, containing a pint of water, to the dining-room, the only apartment where a coal fire was burning. It took the water what seemed a very long time to boil, though by the clock it was but a few minutes. She brought the gum-arabic bottle from the library, lifted off the kettle, kneeled by the grate, and held the letter over the steaming spout.

"And, Mary, I'm sure, I thought the obstinate thing would never come open. I put on the kettle three several times, but it did seem that G. B. had plastered it down as though it was never intended to be undone. At last I succeeded, — the envelope was opened, — I took out the letter, — and, Mary, what do you think of all imaginable things, but just as I was unfolding the letter with hands that were shaking so I could hardly hold it, the dining-room door was opened, and there stood Mrs. Berkeley.

"If it had been Satan, himself, I could not have been in greater consternation. I jumped up and tried to thrust the letter into my pocket, but Mrs. Berkeley caught it away from me before I had time, and then she demanded what I was doing here with all that apparatus. When she saw that the envelope was directed to Dan, she asked what the deuce I was opening the letter for. I did not answer, and she shook me so that I thought I should never come out of the room alive, but I was determined not to tell, if I was killed, so I cried and sobbed and made all the disturbance I could, and said I did not know, — I thought there might be something in the letter, a photograph, or some such thing as that. Then she told me to stop my infernal noise or I would bring the servants, so I stood whimpering in the corner, and she read the letter from beginning to end."

"*Mrs. Berkeley* read the letter, Hinda!"

"Yes, indeed; she'll do any thing except break one open. Well, the perusal of the letter seemed to produce a wonderful impression. She walked up and down the room with it for some time, with a very grave brow, after which she turned to me and said, 'Have you read this letter, you little hussy?' I said no, I hadn't had a chance. She said it was very lucky that I hadn't, replaced it in the envelope, and ordered me to seal it up, saying, that if I dared to tell anybody that she had read it, she would wring my neck. I began to breathe, on this, for I saw that there was nothing in it about me, and was delighted to escape so easily. I pasted it up with gum-Arabic, under Mrs. Berkeley's superintendence, and she made me lay it again on the hall table, warning me not to venture to touch it. All last evening till Dan came in I was in fear and trembling, but I found Mrs. Berkeley did not mean to say any thing on the subject, and he did not notice that the letter had been opened. The strangest thing to me was, how Mrs. Berkeley got in without my knowing it; I was sure I should hear her ring, and I could not conceive how it happened until I saw her give Dan his night-key, last evening. I was in such a state of excitement that I did not hear the front door open and shut."

Having required a promise which I readily gave, that I would not mention the matter to anybody whomsoever, Hinda now announced that she had come in to ask me to accompany her down town, and was glad to find me preparing to go out. Mrs. Berkeley had suddenly determined not to let her go out alone any more, because somebody's pocket had been picked. I readily consented, and when I came down to the dining-room with Hinda, equipped for the walk, I found all whom I had left there, with the exception of Hervey. Mrs. Berkeley, as soon as she saw us, enlarged on the fact that Miss Gramercy's pocket-book had been snatched out of her hand, charged us to walk discreetly through the streets, without stopping or staring about, and requested Dan to go down with us and pay the bill due at Arnold & Constable's, and see that Hinda did not run up a new one. Berkeley was very willing to go, but while Mrs. Berkeley was engaged in counting out the bills, his attention was suddenly caught by a bottle on the mantel-piece behind the candelabra.

"Here's that gum-Arabic I was looking for this morning," said he, "how came it here?"

There was silence for a moment. Mrs. Berkeley looked up from the pile of bills, and said, facetiously: "Answer, Hinda."

"I had it," said Hinda, immediately, "I thought it was the vermin exterminator, or some such thing as that."

"I hope no such thing as that is needed in this room," said Dan, while Mrs. Berkeley, with a significant shrug of the shoulders muttered, "Lies like a chambermaid."

This remark escaped Dan's attention, as it was made while he was directing Reynolds to take the gum-arabic to the library, and the look of alarm that was half-veiled by Hinda's long eyelashes, was perceptible only to me. As soon as Berkeley professed himself ready to attend us, Hinda hurried me out of the house with speed.

It was a most beautiful day. The sun's bright rays, shed from a cloudless sky, fell gaily on the populace that poured, in two living streams along the great thoroughfare of the city, and made the tops of the buildings, as far as eye could reach, a galaxy of burnished light. All the way from Twenty-third street to Canal, Berkeley did not address to me a single observation beyond the positive demands of civility, and I walked on in silence at the right hand of Hinda, who, coursing along between us, kept up a steady conversation with her companion on the left. There was a presentiment of evil heavy on my mind. I felt wounded by Dan's continued coldness, which I no longer sought to dissipate, for I had already despaired of a renewal of our former friendship. While I was still in this frame of mind, we reached Canal street and entered the store of Arnold & Constable. Hinda and I stopped at a counter, while Dan walked around to one more distant.

"Mrs. J. L. Berkeley's bill," I heard him say. The answer returned was, "Four hundred dollars." After the lapse of a minute Dan rejoined us.

"Hinda, have you a hundred dollar note?" he inquired.

"No, Dan, I never had such a thing in my life."

"Mrs. Berkeley has mistaken the amount in a singular manner," said he. "She told me it was three hundred dollars, and since you are not disposed to assist me, I must defer the payment."

"I saw you with more than one fifty dollar note last night," said Hinda.

Dan observed that that was quite a different thing from this morning, said that he should be obliged to go down to Hudson street for a loan, and, without a word to me, he asked Hinda to accompany him, and they left the store together. I went to the door with some feelings of chagrin at the unceremonious manner in which I was treated, and gazed after them as they threaded their way adown the crowded block, watching the light swing of

his elegant figure and the flounces on the long trail of Hinda's dress, thrown back by his foot at every step they gracefully measured. They were soon lost in the crowd, and while I stood occupied with my sad ruminations, I was suddenly accosted by the unknown correspondent of the lovely and discreet Miss Wriothesley. Where he came from, whether from down the street, or from across the way, or from within the store, I could not determine. In truth, I did not speculate upon the matter, — he was there, — that was enough.

Was he intruding! If he was, I had only to say so, and he would be gone as suddenly as he came. I said so, directly, and with emphasis that could not be mistaken, and requested him to go. The next thing I was called upon to tell him was, how on earth was it possible for him to obey my commands. I said it should be quite possible for a gentleman to abstain from annoying a lady. He declared that it was not possible for *him*. He had received Miss Hinda's letter, was dying at the thought of her displeasure, and having met me so accidentally, I must appoint some place where I could take a letter from him to her whom he adored. I said I knew of no place, — if I did I would not appoint it, — and gave him fair warning that, much as I disliked any publicity, I should turn back into Arnold's and speak to the cashier.

"Heavens, sweet angel!" exclaimed my persecutor, "how would that assist you? The cashier and the clerks at Arnold's all know *me*, — the clerks at Stewart's all know *me*. Every lawyer and broker in Wall street, — every merchant on Broadway, — every man about town knows *me*. I'm the man that's everywhere, and everybody knows me. You'll find me on Central Park, and at the Fashion Course, and in the billiard-room, all at the same time. Should you rush into Arnold's, and present the most moving spectacle under the sun of beauty in distress, they would all tell you that you have nothing whatever to fear from me. I am the most clever and good-natured fellow in the universe."

The reason that I had not turned immediately back into the store was, that there were two ladies whom I knew making purchases within, and I did not care to have them see me coming in with such an appendage. My alarm lest Berkeley should return before I was rid of his company was excessive. I hurried up Canal street, and thence up Broadway, my persecutor by my side, — and before I had gone three blocks I met as many gentlemen of my acquaintance, with whom I exchanged salutations,

my cheeks dyed with the most painful crimson. In sheer desperation I turned back, and my unwelcome companion turned also.

"If you do not leave me," said I, "I shall speak to the first policeman I meet."

"Goodness, will you?" he exclaimed. "Picture it, — think of it! I locked up as a criminal! you locked up as a witness! You giving testimony down among a rabble at the Tombs' police court! There's one of the Broadway squad on the corner, — shall I tell him that you wish to speak to him?"

I proceeded in silence till I stopped once more in front of Arnold's.

"Why do you follow me in this manner?" said I.

"Because I am desperate; I desire to make your acquaintance."

"Then do it in a lawful way," said I; "if you are a gentleman, you ought to be able to produce references to satisfy my guardian."

"Ah! what a bright thought," said he; "who could have expected it? So young too! I'll do it, — hang me, but I'll do it. *Tell* me your guardian's name, and your own, and that of your friend, and immediately I will give you mine, after which I will find references to satisfy the whole party."

"My name," I answered, "is Brandegee, and my friend's is Wriothesley, and that of our guardian, Berkeley."

"Berkeley," he repeated, with a slight elevation of the eyebrows, "and Brandegee, and Wriothesley. I'm vastly obliged to you. General Berkeley, I presume, — is it?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Now, then," he continued, "as you seem to expect equal candor on my part, *my* name is — Jones."

"Jones!" I repeated in indignation; "it would have been quite as easy to say Smith or Brown."

"Quite as easy, but not quite as honorable, Miss Brandegee. 'Pon my soul, that is my name. Go into Arnold's and ask any man you meet if he knows Jones. Every one will answer, yes."

"I dare say they all know Smith too," I answered. "Mr. Jones, I desire you to leave me, now that you have my name."

"Yes, I am just going; but I must observe first that I have something else besides your name. You wrote me a letter, if you recollect, signed by Miss Hinda's *nom de plume*. I presume some of the Berkeleys know your hand, and perhaps you would like to recover the document."

"Oh heavens! *where* is the letter?" I exclaimed, taking in at a single thought the consciousness of all the snares by which I was beset.

"Not so loud! Miss Brandegee, if you please; or people will stare rather more than even your beauty will authorize. The letter is safe, of course, — here in the inside lining of the lower corner of the breast pocket of my undercoat, when it is turned upside down. Of course I am too honorable to retain it against your wishes, but it is sewed in tight, — couldn't rip it out now for any consideration. It might excite suspicion for me to hand you a letter in the street. I fear I have compromised myself already by talking to you so long in public."

I took a few steps further, he sauntering on by my side, and afar down on the opposite side of the street, I caught sight of Hinda's light plush cloak. I looked up at my tormentor in anguish of soul, and exclaimed:

"Mr. Jones, if there is a spark of honor or manliness in you, give me the letter, and go."

"If you will meet me on Monday next, at three o'clock, and take a letter to Miss Wriothesley, I will give you the letter that you have written me, then and there, and will leave you at once, upon my honor as a gentleman."

"You are no gentleman!"

"How beautiful you look when your eyes flash in that way. No gentleman, did you say? You will think differently when I produce my credentials."

"Never," said I; "should I discover you to be of the highest rank in Europe, or of the oldest blood in the State, it would never efface the remembrance of your rudeness to-day. Where shall I meet you?"

"Jersey city — Seven Horns' tavern — out of the way sort of place, but keep up Atlantic Avenue to —— street, then turn down, and you'll easily find it. Good-morning." And at last he left me.

I hurried down the block till I met Hinda and Berkeley crossing to the corner, and went back with them to the store. Berkeley left us, after having paid the bill. As soon as I could prevail upon Hinda to forego tossing over a quantity of things that she did not intend to buy, I dragged myself home in a state of exhaustion: I suffered the whole of that day with a severe nervous headache, caused by my late excitement, and on Sunday, from a low fever, which prevented me from going out. I lay all day on the sofa, in Mrs. Berkeley's room; and could not sleep

that night for many hours, while thinking over my appointment at Jersey City. All the benefit which could accrue to me from the fulfilment of a promise which I scarcely felt bound in honor to keep, would be the recovery of a letter which I had foolishly written at Hinda's request. I had been so rash as to tell that man my name; it was, therefore, in his power to do me a great deal of injury with the Berkeleys. The possibility of Dan's ever seeing that letter was to be avoided at all risks. Discovery did not enter my thoughts, for how was it possible that an aristocratic Virginian family had any connection with an obscure tavern in Jersey City? I dreaded nothing but the chances of a conspiracy laid between the unscrupulous Hinda and her devoted admirer to shield her by injuring me, should the matter come to the knowledge of the Berkeleys. I decided, therefore, to go.

Mrs. Berkeley sent up the next morning to know if I was able to appear at breakfast. I did not feel able; but recollecting that, if I was to go out in the afternoon, I ought to be able to come downstairs in the morning, I made a great exertion, rose, dressed, and appeared in the breakfast-room when the meal was nearly over. I could eat nothing, merely tasting a cup of coffee, and I sat speechless, a prey to the most fearful nervous excitement.

This excitement was nowise abated by the discovery that I was not escaping observation. I had not looked at Dan Berkeley once that I did not find his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon me, and the consciousness embarrassed me deeply.

"Child, the fact is you are not well," said Mrs. Berkeley, with wondrous consideration, as I rose from the table. She advised me to go up to her room, and lie down on the sofa. Dan asked if she did not think it best to send for the doctor.

"Oh no!" I exclaimed, in horror. "Don't think of it, Aunt Judith! indeed, I am quite well."

Mrs. Berkeley, taking no notice of my remonstrance, said yes, that if I was no better in the course of the next three hours, she would have advice.

I moved toward the door, but as I passed Dan's chair he stopped me by the question:

"Have you any headache, Miss Mary?"

I said yes.

"And chills?"

I confessed to the chills.

Dan took my hand. "And fever also, I perceive."

"And no appetite," said Mrs. Berkeley. "She must have a cold."

"I'm afraid not," Dan rejoined. He dropped my hand, and I escaped to Mrs. Berkeley's room, where, in a few moments, she found me lying on the sofa with my face buried in the cushions.

She came to announce that Dan thought I had taken the varioloid. I said I had no reason for thinking so; and she went on to impart that Dan had just told her that he had been to see a friend who was ill with that disease, within the last two weeks; that he had an idea that I had taken it in that way, and said he was going for the doctor himself.

I said at once that I was vaccinated at school so lately as last winter. A case of varioloid had broken out there, and all the young ladies were inoculated by a physician. Mrs. Berkeley went down to reassure Dan, and my excitement having in a measure subsided, I fell into a quiet slumber. I was horrified on awaking to find it as late as one o'clock.

I rung, and asked the servant where the rest of the family were. Mr. Hervey had been out since breakfast. Mrs. Berkeley had left in the carriage with Miss Agatha; and Miss Judith had gone down town with Mr. Dan, but she was coming home soon, on account of the dressmaker; and Miss Hinda was in her own room.

I hurried to dress, and was out of the house by half-past one, took an omnibus on the corner of Broadway, asked the driver to stop the first one he saw bound for Jersey ferry, drew my veil closely over my face when I changed stages, crossed the river in fear and trembling, and when on the other side, felt comparatively safe. I found the Inn of the Seven Horns without much trouble; and after asking if Mr. Jones was there, was shown into the back parlor.

The door was closed after me, and deeply regretting that I had not been shown to a more public apartment, I paced the room in the greatest agitation. It seemed to me the most quiet description of an inn that I ever had met in the course of my travels, and my anxious and natural consideration now was, how to get out of it again.

I stopped, at last, before a mirror hanging above a little table, at the back part of the room. As I stood regarding the troubled expression that rested on my features, the door was suddenly opened, and a man's face appeared. I caught his eye in the glass. He stood for one minute as though in utter consternation. It was Jocelyn. The recognition was complete on both sides, I

am confident. As I turned to see if the glass had deceived me, the door was instantly closed. While I stood overcome with astonishment at this rencounter with a man whom I never had expected to meet again, I heard a voice in the upper part of the house, calling in tones of the most acute distress. I opened the door and listened; for the voice had sounded quite familiar. The tones were more fearfully distinct than ever.

"I'm a comin', Miss Kassie," was answered from a lower room.

Miss Kassie! what could it mean? I rushed up the stairway, but on the first landing was met by Mrs. Berkeley's former slave, Cinderella. She pulled me back with a violence that almost threw me down the stairs. "Fur de Lord's sake, Miss Mary," she cried, "don't go up dem stairs, — don't go near dat room, — Miss Kassie's dar a dyin' ob de smallpox."

I went, bewildered, slowly down the stairs. At their foot I was met by Jocelyn. "Miss Brandegee," he said, with some agitation of manner, "do not, I beseech you, mention to the Berkeleys that I have any connection with this house. They have all an idea that I am in England. Jones will be with you, directly, in the back parlor. He has just risen, and is dressing as quickly as possible."

Just risen! at three o'clock in the afternoon! I had just returned to the back parlor aforesaid, when I heard Cinderella bawling from the head of the stairs, "Massa Josselin, — Massa Josselin, you better clar down de back cellar-way jess as fass am you can! Massa Dan Berkeley am jess a gittin' out ob de kerridge at de front door."

"Dan Berkeley! I am lost!" was my thought, as Jocelyn rushed across the hall, and a heavy door swung behind him. I had presence of mind sufficient to know that my safest course was to remain quiet, and wait the order of events. Cinderella clattered down the stairs in answer to the sharp, quick ring. I understood it all. Dan had come to see his sister! Still there was a chance that it might not be. Cinderella opened the door. There was no mistake! I should have known that voice among a thousand.

"Cinderella, how is your mistress, to-day?"

"Werry low, Massa Dan. Tink she won't lib long. Walk into de back parlor, an' I'll fetch you your bad cloes."

The back parlor! Horrors! I looked around in desperation, rushed frantically toward the first door I saw, and found myself inside a closet which was quite capacious, but smelled abominably of cheese. The door was not capable of being shut tight, —

it was warped or swollen in some way, and I was forced to hold it by the knob. I heard Dan Berkeley's footstep in the room from which that door was the only partition. I thought that he must hear the beating of my heart. He walked about unsteadily for a minute, and then I was relieved by hearing Cinderella shuffle in.

"De doctor says de leas' cloes you war, de better, so I spose Massa 'll 'scuse me losin' de coat. Can't find it high ner low, — looked eberywhar too. Spose Massa 'll tink dis shirt an' trousers am sufficient."

"Yes, never mind the coat, if it can't be found; but I want the silk handkerchief that I had last Thursday afternoon; did you lose that too?"

"It's in de drawer ob de table, Massa."

"That will do, — now decamp," said Berkeley. I heard Cinderella go out. Dan locked the door after her, — locked the doors communicating with the front parlor, closed the blinds of the window, but probably found no catches on them, as they bounced open against the side of the house, and he contented himself with drawing down the shades. What if he should come to the closet! I stood so dizzy with fear that I could scarcely retain my hold on the door-knob, but Berkeley evidently had no idea beyond that of changing his clothes as quick as possible. He made considerable racket about it, — a necessary accompaniment of expeditious dressing, where there was probably much to pull off, and certainly little to put on. As I listened with a sinking soul to the rattling of buttons falling against chairs, and the noise of boots kicked off on the floor, I heard a clatter at the outside door, and a voice calling in these terms:

"Come, my dear young lady! what does this mean? Open sesame."

"The deuce!" muttered Dan. "Wrong door, sir," he added, aloud.

This observation was probably lost on the party outside, who shook the door strenuously. "I see the beauty of the joke, madam, entirely; really, there is no time to lose; be kind enough to open — open — open."

"*Do* restrain your impatience till a man gets on some rags," called Dan. After the bustle of another minute he turned the key in the lock.

"Berkeley, my dear fellow, is this you? you don't say so."

"The dickens! Jones, what brought *you* here?"

These salutations filled me with forebodings. As nearly as I could judge, friend Jones had sauntered in and taken a chair.

"Dressing for the stage, Berkeley, with that great yellow thing tied around your head?"

"No. What brought you here to-day, Jones? Did you know there was a case of varioloid in the house?"

"I did not know till I came, about six o'clock this morning. If I had, I should not have appointed a meeting here this afternoon with a young lady."

"Why don't you send word to her not to come?" asked Dan.

"Can't, my dear fellow, — can't, — clandestine affair, — entirely so. Fine girl, — quite a beauty."

"Well, I must meet a beauty too," said Dan, "or rather one who was formerly such, and it's inconvenient, as a man must dress for the occasion."

"You going up to the smallpox room?" said Jones, "and to see a lady! Why, it's quite interesting. I hope she won't *lose* her beauty. Let me go with you. I would like just such a spree."

"No — no — Jones, — don't be an ass," Dan rejoined. "The spree might not end to your fancy."

Berkeley left the room. As soon as I heard his step on the staircase, I issued from the closet, informing Mr. Jones that I could not stay a single second, and must lose no time in leaving the house. Jones represented to me shortly that I could not make my exit by the front door, where Berkeley's coachman was stationed, nor yet by the back one, since it led into a court-yard, upon which the upper windows all looked down; and that my best plan would be to wait in the next room until Berkeley had gone, when he (Jones) would hold his conversation with me. I was in misery, but there was nothing to be done but to stay where I was. The fear of infection did not once occur to me, — but I should have felt secure against varioloid, even if I had been free to give it any thought whatever. I therefore awaited Berkeley's departure with nerves utterly unstrung. I informed Mr. Jones that I wanted the letter he had promised to give me, without any delay, and if he had any to send to Hinda, that, too, must be at once delivered. Thereupon he begun a profuse apology for his rudeness on the previous Saturday, saying that he extremely regretted his evil behavior, hoped I would pardon it, entirely occasioned by his distress of mind regarding Miss Hinda, etc.; to all of which I listened with extreme impatience. He finished by handing me two letters, one of which bore the superscription,

"Miss Wriothesley," and the other was directed, in my hand, to the initials and post-office which he had originally designated.

I had just pocketed the letter to Hinda, and was proceeding to examine the contents of the other envelope which bore the marks of its fall in the mud, when I heard Dan coming down the staircase. "You cannot get into that room," said Jones, as I looked toward the door of the adjoining apartment. "Recollect, Berkeley locked it. Fall back on the closet, and I'll prevent his entering it with my life. This grows very interesting, — like a regular French intrigue."

Not pausing to respond to this comment, I was at once within the closet, and had pulled the door as far shut as it would go, when Berkeley reëntered the little parlor.

"Jones, these clothes may give you the varioloid. If you have any fear of it you can leave the room."

"Lord, no — oh no — goodness — no! I had the varioloid myself eight years ago." And Jones took a chair, which he used as a cane till he reached the fatal closet, and jamming the back of the said chair against the door, in a very significant manner, he sat down upon it.

"I suppose you have had the disease, Berkeley, since you are paying visits to people who might communicate it."

"No; I have never had it," answered Berkeley; "and, by the way, if it is time for your appointment, you ought to be looking out for the damsel. She might have some objections to coming in."

"She'll ring, probably," said Jones; "and I'll attend to the rest. I have waited for some time now. I cannot be propitious after four o'clock, any way; and if she's not here by that time, she won't see me."

"Oh, you would not be so shabby as to disappoint her!" Dan rejoined. "By the way, Jones, can't I stay and see her?"

"Private, my dear fellow, — private. She belongs to the first circles of society."

"Doubtless," said Berkeley, "seeing that that is the class of individuals frequenting the Seven Horns tavern. Is she handsome?"

"Fair as an angel. Wouldn't have you see her for the world. It's an affair à la Brancton."

"Deliver me from affairs à la Brancton," said Berkeley.

"That is," Jones continued, "I could not positively assert that she is married. She's quite young, under twenty, very sweet, and intensely handsome. I fell in with her on Broadway. I

gave her an address; — 'pon my soul I fell quite in love with her. Worst of all is, the poor thing is so desperately in love with me. She has written to me two or three dozen times since, — appointed interviews in the street, so many that I could not attend them all (interfered so with other ladies), — and I was obliged to get up some lame excuses. Fact is, I thought the matter was getting rather fast. I had reasons for wishing to retire gracefully. Brancton was as jealous of her as the devil, — she happened to hear of it in some way through her French waiting-maid, and got hold of a letter my Dulcinea had written. It did go a little further than I anticipated at first; we had exchanged locks of hair, daguerreotypes, and all that sort of thing. At last, in one of our meetings, she spoke of a private interview. Any appointment I chose to make she said she would accept with pleasure, so I mentioned the Seven Horns, never dreaming, you know, that she would come 'way over to Jersey City."

"Why, she's quite a gay young party, eh! Jones," said Dan. "If I were you I should certainly find out whether she has a husband or not."

"Berkeley, you are getting cautious. What's the matter? Anybody been ordering pistols and coffee for two?"

"No, Jones; it's rather late in the day for me to cultivate a fear of pistols, — but the fact is, I'm tired of it. Then again it's bad to get up that kind of a character. I had on hand two meetings for one day with a couple of Prussians near Berlin; — had to hurry from one to the other. One fellow challenged me because his sister-in-law sent me a card; and the other, because his wife said she wished him at Jericho. Never saw either of the women in my life. It was demned inconvenient. If I had any important business on hand more than three hours ahead, I didn't venture to look at a lady in the street."

"Oh well, this is not Berlin," Jones rejoined; "and as for this girl, I am sure she is not married, as she is so manifestly ready to marry me. One day she threw out several hints to that effect, and when I took no notice of them she raised quite a storm, and wanted back her letters."

"Then if that is her idea, give her back her letters, and let her go," said Dan, as he drew up the shades; and from the comments which next ensued, I judged he had thrown the clothes, which he had worn in Kassie's apartment, out of the window.

"Out with the boots, Berkeley," said Jones; "not that I fear they will impart the infection, but they don't look well in a parlor. My Dulcinea may stay some time if I say I'll marry her. A promise is cheap."

"Don't promise a woman any thing that you do not intend to perform," said Berkeley. "A woman clings to a promise that a man don't keep, with the tenacity of the devil himself."

"There would be a lawsuit, you think?" observed Jones, sneeringly.

"Yes; there would be a breach of promise case," said Berkeley, "and a scoundrel behind it. My principle has always been a fair understanding of terms in all cases, and I have succeeded quite as well with the fair sex as the most of mankind. Now, then, I'm off, — you'll be at dinner to-morrow at Mrs. Brancton's?"

Jones said he should; Dan bade him good-morning, and left the room. As soon as I heard him close the door, I pushed open that of the closet, and came out. Without looking at Jones, against whom I was bitterly incensed, I walked on directly toward the hall door, through which Berkeley had just passed. Before I reached it, however, it was re-opened from the outside, with the words: "Jones, I forgot to say" — the speech remained unfinished; and I was standing face to face with him whom, of all men on earth, I should least wish to meet in such a situation.

Berkeley looked first at me, and then at Jones; but he had been too long used to self-command to betray any astonishment at this unexpected *dénouement*. I did not dare to look up. I stood like one in a dream, and leaned for support on the back of a chair, while the third party present said, with an exaggerated flourish of the hand, "Why, my dear Miss Brandegee; if you had not left the closet in such a fearful hurry, he would have been entirely gone in another minute!"

"Wretch!" I exclaimed.

A laugh from Jones, — a derisive smile on Berkeley's well-cut lips! The latter bowed low to me, begged pardon for his intrusion, and was withdrawing. I must command myself, — I must speak now or never.

"Mr. Dan Berkeley," I said, "I throw myself on your protection, — as a gentleman you cannot refuse it."

"Certainly not," said Berkeley. "How can I serve you?"

"By taking me out of this house," I gasped rather than said, accompanying the request by a look so imploring as to leave no doubt of its sincerity.

Berkeley offered me his arm, conducted me through the hall, out of the house, and assisted me into the carriage that stood before the door.

"I advise you to let down the windows," he said. A glance at my face, however, showed him how utterly unable I was to obey the coldly given injunction, and he stepped in and lowered the sashes himself; then, telling the coachman to drive home directly, he shut the door, touched his hat, and turned back into the inn from which the next minute found me riding away.

It was a wise precaution in him to open the windows, otherwise I should have fainted long before reaching home. As I dashed on up Broadway, I examined the letter which had been given me by Mr. Jones as mine. It contained a blank sheet of paper. Under a less trial I might have succumbed. The weight of this day's suffering was so great that my spirits had undergone an immediate reaction. Thank Heaven that such is my nature. If it were not, I never could have endured the sufferings of my life thus far. On reaching home, I dragged myself immediately up to Hinda's room. She was asleep, and, throwing Mr. Jones' letter on the bed beside her, I left the room. In a fearful depression of spirits, I paced the floor of my own apartment for the next half hour. The step by which I had thought I could save myself from any consequences of an indiscreet compliance with a former request of Hinda's had been the means of compromising me seriously in the eyes of a man whose friendship it was my daily effort to gain. How little I deserved his ill-opinion I could not explain, without an elaborate elucidation involving the secret of another, who, however unscrupulous she might be, I still had no right to betray. From this reverie I was roused by the striking of the hour of six, and the appearance of the servant who summoned me to dinner.

"Is Mr. Dan at home?" I inquired, in the earnest hope of receiving a negative response. But Dan, alas! *was* home. I struggled for courage to descend, and sent word at last that I was not well. I remembered that it was the evening of the soirée, and proceeded to dress at my leisure. When I came down I found that none of the guests had arrived. Mrs. Berkeley, Judith, Lionel Hervey, and Dan all stood by the fireside. As I approached, Mrs. Berkeley addressed me.

"Here's little Mary," she said, giving me a gentle pat on the shoulder. "You look quite ill, my child, and I'm told you went out to-day, which was highly imprudent. You seem to have some fever yet."

Judith inquired about my headache, which I said was somewhat better.

"How are the chills?" asked Dan.

To this low-spoken, satirical question, I could not reply, except by a look which measured him from head to foot; and after answering a few interrogatories of Mrs. Berkeley I moved away.

There were very few that evening at the soirée, and they were all gone by eleven o'clock. Dan stood on the front door-steps talking for some time to one of the gentlemen. Mrs. Berkeley went to bed, — the young ladies followed her example. Hervey, also, had disappeared. I sat by the table in the front parlor, hearing only the sound of the voices of Judith and her lover in the adjoining room. At last Dan reëntered. He gave some orders to the servants about shutting up the house.

"You may leave these bolts as they are, Reynolds," I heard him say, and as I saw that he was putting on his overcoat, I decided not to go upstairs till he was out of the house. Instead of that, he reëntered the parlor with his hat in his hand. What a look he gave me!

"You look as though you had something to say to me," I observed, with all the nonchalance and independence that I could command.

"I have," he said. "It is very little, however, and entirely for your own sake, not that of the family with which you are staying."

"Then I do not belong to the family!" said I, "and cannot compromise its honor!"

"We have always been able to take care of our own honor," Dan replied haughtily; "I fear it would suffer in the hands of those who are utterly regardless of their own personal reputation."

I looked at him in silence. He went on, and in a few words, which were, however, very plain, laid before me the height of imprudence which my actions had displayed, and what he considered the indelicacy of my conduct. The world required greater circumspection than this, and society demanded more regard to its rules from its members. Eighteen years was young, but at that age people were supposed to know how to behave themselves in the public streets, and when they did otherwise it was attributed to want of discretion, — to laxity of morals, — to vulgarity of taste; and these were the very mildest terms which would serve the occasion. Moreover, I had been unfortunate in the selection of my confederate in the flirtation. If this low affair should happen to be spoken of or alluded to by Jones in a fit of jealousy, or a fit of wrath, or a fit of intoxication (which was the most likely of the three), nothing except the fact that

he (Jones) was a notorious liar, and the high position of my guardian, could save my reputation. All this and much more he said, and I answered not a single syllable from beginning to end. I sat and gazed at him steadily whilst pronouncing this decision, in his whole manner as utterly composed as though he were only advising me as to the expediency of not going out in the rain. The severity of his words, however, cut me to the soul, and before he had finished my face was buried in my handkerchief, and I was crying as though my heart would break. In fact, I thought it would, but, as it has not broken in worse emergencies than that, I can only conclude that it was nowhere near the dividing point at that time.

He finished with a cold good-night, and left me. I heard the front door close behind him. As I passed Mrs. Berkeley's room, in a very unhappy mood of mind, she called to me to know if that was Dan who had just gone out. I replied in the affirmative.

"And here it is half-past eleven!" she exclaimed. "A man with such a fearful cough as he has, going out at this time of night, ought to wear a strait-jacket. What can he mean by it?"

As I was utterly unable to answer this question, I went to my own room, and feeling that my depression of spirits would not permit sleep to visit my eyelids for some hours to come, I took a book and read till my eyes swam so that I could not see the page. I extinguished the light, and took a seat by the window. The moon shone brightly down on the white spires of the city, the streets were quiet and deserted, and after the watchman's round was passed no sign of life was visible.

The bells rang two. I still occupied my lonely position by the window, determined to retain it until Dan was home. A long half-hour passed away, — then came the light, quick fall of a pedestrian's feet on the sidewalk, — and the deep, hard cough, which, for the last month, invariably gave notice of his coming, sounded more and more distinctly in the lessening distance. He ascended the steps. As I left the window I heard the house-door open and shut, — then followed the foot-fall on the staircase, but there had been another watchful eye and ear beside my own. Just as he came up the last flight of stairs I heard Mrs. Berkeley's voice in the hall, outside my door.

"Dan, why will you kill yourself at this rate?"

"Don't you wish I was dead? If you do, there is one point on which we agree most thoroughly. I wish to God I could die this minute, and you need not say you would not be delighted if I should."

"Stop talking in that fiendish way. *I* wish you were dead! Did I ever say so? You are very much mistaken in supposing that I am not your friend, Dan. I love you as though you were the son of my own flesh and blood, and, I have sometimes thought, a great deal better."

"Ha! ha! ha!" A long, ringing laugh broke from his lips "O Lord! Mrs. Berkeley, — that's the latest kind of a joke. Don't say it again, or I cannot survive it."

"Would I have stayed up till three o'clock in the morning, watching for you, if I had no affection for you?"

"That's incomplete, — you should tack on 'my son' or 'my child.' I am tired out of my senses, — do let me go to bed, — you can come in afterward and sing me some pious little nursery hymns."

"Oh, curse you for a crazy fool."

"There, that sounds natural. I thought you would tire of the sentimental vein. Curses are the sweetest things in life, on the lips of some people."

"Well, — go along to bed." They separated. Berkeley entered his room, — moved about irregularly for a few minutes, — then I heard him throw himself upon his couch. I went to mine, but I could not sleep. I believed every word that Mrs. Berkeley had spoken. I felt that a woman of her strength of character must have some love for the son of her husband, who had lived for years under her roof. I could understand, however, that he did not believe it, and I could appreciate the regret which she might expend on the errors of his education, though of all women on earth she least knew the proper way to repair them.

As I lay busied with these ruminations, the sound of a low, half-suppressed groan from the adjoining room, gave me the first intimation of what, hitherto, I had not suspected, — that Berkeley's irregular life was far from being a happy one. I listened for a repetition, and it came.

"O God!" The ejaculation, fraught with the utmost intensity of anguish, fell distinctly on my ear. A long fit of coughing followed, continuing without intermission while I heard him turn, in a fever of restlessness, again and again. I could not sleep, — my own nervous excitement had not sufficiently abated, and the sound of that steady cough in the adjacent room grated on my ear. As it at last subsided, it was followed by a heavy sigh.

Mrs. Berkeley's step was in the hall, and I heard her open the door of Dan's apartment, which had not been secured.

"What the deuce are you coming in here for?" said he.

"To see what the matter is. You have been flouncing about and groaning for the last hour. Any thing wrong?"

"Yes, a d——d hard bed, and a d——d uneasy pillow."

This reply was followed up by a recurrence of the cough, which lasted many minutes.

"Your conduct, Dan, in dissipating at the rate you do, is absolutely suicidal," said Mrs. Berkeley. "You know your left lung is half gone."

"I dare say, it is *all* gone, madam, and what would you have me do? I cannot buy it back, — or swear it back, — or pray it back again, can I? If a thing is gone for all eternity, what is the use in talking about it?"

"I came in to see if I could do any thing for you?"

"Yes, — perhaps you can. What were you going to ask me when you stopped me on the stairs? I would rather hear it now than to-morrow."

"I had nothing to ask. I came in to see what the matter was, I tell you."

"Well, I have something to advise," said Dan, "and that is, that you look after that Jarvis. I have very little faith in him, and quite as little in that fellow I picked up in France, Germain. The deuce may know what I keep him for, — though if I go to California I shall need him. I noticed the other day that a letter of mine had been meddled with in some way."

"I know, — but it was neither Jarvis' nor Germain's doing," she replied.

"I did not say it was," said Dan, "I only advise you not to trust them to the same extent as Reynolds."

"The villains are all well enough," said Mrs. Berkeley. "If the letter to which you refer was one from Ramsay Jones, it was Hinda who opened it."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, — I saw her at it, — that I can answer to, and had I been five minutes later, the contents of the document would have been in her possession instead of mine."

"What did she open it for?"

"I don't know. What does any one play the fool for? She said she thought she knew the writing."

"She thought she knew the writing," Dan repeated.

"Yes, and she thought there was something in the letter."

"There is in most letters."

"A picture, or a card, or something about her. Most unaccountable." Dan was silent.

"And I never knew any one so ready with a lie," continued Mrs. Berkeley. "Told you the very next morning, that she took the gum-arabic for insect poison. Hinda's a she-devil."

"Hinda's a brick," said Dan, with a laugh. "I suppose now your mind is relieved."

"Yes, — I must go, for I am half dead. Can I do any thing for you?"

"You may measure me a teaspoonful of laudanum from that bottle in the closet. Strike a light, first, or you'll get the morphine by mistake."

"What do you keep such drugs for? A teaspoonful of laudanum will kill you."

"No it won't, — don't multiply words."

Mrs. Berkeley moved about for a few minutes, then I heard her say:

"Now, before you take this vile dose, tell me if you are in any trouble about your money matters. If I can help you I will."

"Nothing troubles me, except that I cannot sleep. Are you sure this is laudanum? There was some morphine in another bottle."

"I won't stand and hold this spoon all night if it's poison. Take it."

"How very maternal! Thank you."

Mrs. Berkeley left the room, and I heard her enter her own apartment. With a mind greatly relieved by the conversation which I had thus overheard, although it had revealed no secret that I did not know before, I composed myself to sleep.

In the morning I was awakened by a knock which Hinda bestowed on my door. She only came to ask if there were any new developments, on which head I did not satisfy her; and when she left my room I heard her send one of the servants to request Dan to meet her in the library. What she wished to see him for, I did not consider; indeed, I had very little curiosity on the subject. When I came to breakfast, I met her and Dan, just leaving the library, Hinda looking unusually happy, and Dan, with an air which was so thoroughly non-committal that I had no clue to what the subject of their conversation had been.

Breakfast was somewhat later than usual, owing to Mrs. Berkeley's non-appearance at the hour. My scrutiny of Dan brought more strongly to my mind the fact which, of late, I had only casually noticed, — that his features were daily growing more worn and haggard. If his last night's conversation with his step-mother had at all turned the current of his suspicions regarding the

intrigue with Ramsay Jones, nothing of that fact was apparent in his manner to me, for, beyond the first distant salutation, he did not address me, nor did I abate one atom my coldness to him. Hinda left the table just as breakfast was over, to go upstairs and dress for a walk down town. Dan had drawn off to a window, where he seated himself and unfolded the newspaper, paying no attention to any thing beyond its columns. Mrs. Berkeley was in the midst of some interesting discussion with the parties still remaining at the table, when there came a sudden ring at the front door, and a minute after Miss Anderson and her sister Phebe pushed their way directly into the dining-room.

Both ladies were evidently excited; the elder as though just recovering from a violent shock; the younger appearing doubtful whether to laugh or cry. I glanced at Lionel Hervey, whose eye met mine with a significance that showed me there were certainly two in the company whose souls were prepared for the coming announcement. Miss Anderson was not long in making known her errand. Never had such a thing been known to happen at her house before! Miss Hinda Wriothesley was indeed a most extraordinary young lady! Indeed Mrs. Berkeley would do well to exercise a stricter surveillance over that remarkable specimen of the gentler sex! In truth she was a disgrace to the feminine gender.

Mrs. Berkeley looked all amazement, and asked what in the world that little harmless imp of a Hinda had been doing.

"Harmless!" cried Miss Anderson. "Ah! Mrs. Berkeley, you have a viper under your roof! What *could* you say to a young lady who has interviews in the street with young gentlemen, and corresponds with them under fictitious names! This letter has fallen into my hands; thirty others just like it have come directed to my house in the same way, unauthorized by me, as you may well judge."

"Oh, no, sister! not thirty, — only three," said Miss Phebe.

"Well," said Miss Anderson, angrily; "three or thirty, — what does it matter? Is it not equally shameful — scandalous — monstrous, as though there had been three hundred? I sent the last one to you, Mrs. Berkeley, and I suppose it must have been intercepted by Miss Wriothesley."

Mr. Hervey here remarked, that he had taken that letter at the door, and, as it was directed to Miss Hinda, he had sent it to her at once. Mrs. Berkeley, in the mean time, had broken open the letter, and sent Reynolds upstairs to tell Hinda to stop in the dining-room before she went out. The Andersons did not wait

until she came, but went away directly. As soon as they had gone, Mrs. Berkeley read aloud the letter, in the hearing of Dan, her two daughters, Livy, and me, — Mr. Hervey having left the room as soon as she began. The letter was not a very long one, but it was quite conclusive. It was dated the morning of the previous Saturday, but a delay had occurred in the mailing, probably not the fault of Mr. Jones, for it was post-marked Monday, the day preceding. Petrarch was filled with regret at the thought of his Laura's displeasure. What could he do to appease her? If she would only meet him again at Hoboken, or any other place she might be pleased to appoint, he would explain all to her entire satisfaction. If she was too highly incensed to meet him, would she not allow him to write a full explanation? He thought the letters reached her quite safely, via Fifth Avenue, and he must be forgiven for writing so once more. Would not Miss Hinda be kind enough to send her pretty young friend somewhere to meet him, and receive a letter, and if she refused to come, might not Miss Hinda threaten her with the fact that he (Petrarch) had a letter written and directed in the said young lady's handwriting?

"What is all this the fellow says!" cried Mrs. Berkeley. "Pretty young friend! Judith! Gatty! Mary! — what one of you has been writing letters for Hinda? Where are you going, Mary? Stop and answer me."

I answered that I had nothing to say, and I was spared further questions by the rustle of Hinda's dress in the hall. When she came in, and perceived that there was a letter in the case, she turned, for one instant, deadly pale; then recovering her usual self-possession, she inquired for what she was wanted.

"Is that for *you?*" asked Mrs. Berkeley, whose eyes were gleaming like two coals of fire as she fastened them on Hinda's face, and pushed the letter toward her.

Hinda said she did not know; and if it was, she could not see who had had the impudence to open it.

Mrs. Berkeley started up, and catching Hinda by the shoulders shook her in a very energetic manner.

"You little hussy!" she cried. "Is this the way in which you repay my kindness!" while Hinda, looking greatly dissatisfied with this last proof of it, struggled to release herself from the grasp of the angry lady. "How many letters have you had from a man who signs himself Petrarch?"

"None at all," Hinda said.

"And when have you met him at Hoboken?" Hinda said:

"Never." Mrs. Berkeley swore that if she did not tell her the truth at once, she would have every closet, drawer, desk, trunk, bandbox, big box, and little box in her room thoroughly searched; and if the letters were not found, the mattress, palliasse, pillows, and bolster should not be exempt from inspection. Hinda now finding that it had come to the worst, made her confession, in which she seemed anxious to involve as many names as possible. She had received only six through her seamstress, two through Mary direct. The Andersons gave one to Hervey, which he sent her by Mary, Phebe Anderson gave her another, there was one through Miss Anderson, and Mr. Hervey, and one through Dan. That was all. Mrs. Berkeley might search her room till doomsday, and she would find no more.

"Dan!" cried Mrs. Berkeley. "Why, Dan, you confounded, one-sided villain, what have you to do with it?"

"I advise you, madam," said Dan, who, with the utmost composure, had witnessed the scene so far, "to proceed with care in this investigation."

"Twelve letters!" cried Mrs. Berkeley, turning again to Hinda; "and how many have you written to him?"

"I don't know, — not many, — two, and perhaps three. Mary wrote one when I was sick. She knew all about it."

"Where did she meet the fellow, Mary?" asked Judith.

I was silent.

"Oh, Mary will say nothing," answered Mrs. Berkeley. "She would sit and hear all the lies that Hinda chose to tell, without opening her lips. It's a fine natural disposition, but it takes a wrong direction."

Hinda looked defiant and sullen. Mrs. Berkeley soon brought the scene to a close after a little storm, by pronouncing sentence on Miss Wriothesley, to the effect that she was not to be allowed, thereafter, to go out of the house alone, or even accompanied by me. Her room was to be resigned in favor of one at the other end of the house, so that there would be no opportunity for signals exchanged from lattices, unless Hinda chose to get up flirtations hap-hazard with the swains dwelling in the houses on which the back windows looked. Moreover, she was to give an account of every letter she received, and every one she sent.

As these admonitions were brought to a close, Hinda advanced to the table, whereon lay the letters, remarking, that as all the family had had the benefit of this, she supposed she might be allowed to read it.

"Yes; take your truck and go. I never knew such a low-lived hussy."

Hinda seized the letter, and escaped as quickly as she could. Judith and Gatty expressed themselves regarding her conduct in terms of the utmost indignation and contempt. Livy looked pained, and made no remarks. Dan observed that Mrs. Berkeley's vigilance was not well directed. I had not spoken.

"Well," said Mrs. Berkeley, "that girl calls herself pious. If she ever goes to heaven I should prefer to go elsewhere. I used to think Mary was a famous sinner, but I vow Hinda's got the start of her. Come!" she added, patting me on the shoulder, "I'll take you down town with me to-day. Go and put your things on."

I went up to my room, where I found Hinda on her knees before the fireplace, engaged in taking out the bunch of ornamental paper which was in the grate. I thought at first she was crying, but on a nearer approach I saw that she was laughing hysterically.

"I want to make a bonfire here with some books that I have just put inside your closet," she said. "That old termagant will be rummaging my room, and I do not dare to have a smoke there."

"I should think," I replied, "that you might like to burn some letters too."

"No; I am going to ask Dan to keep my letters, and then they will be safe. Did Mrs. Berkeley read this epistle aloud, Mary?"

"Yes; indeed she did."

"Well,—I'm so provoked,—what can Dan think of me, Mary! I told him that I had not met the young man at all, and this letter alludes to our rendezvous at Hoboken. Do you suppose he listened to it?"

"He stayed in the room while the letter was read," said I. "When, pray, did you tell him the falsehood you mention?"

"This morning, in the library."

"Did Dan tell you the gentleman's name, Hinda?"

"Yes; it's Jones — Ramsay Jones;—that notorious flirt of Mrs. Brancton's,—isn't it awful, Mary? Who would have thought that an affair, commenced in such an innocent way just for a little excitement, should have made a time equal to this. I am sure I never anticipated it. Sit down, and I'll tell all that Dan and I said to each other this morning."

I said I could not,—I was going down town with Mrs. Berke-

ley. Hinda said Mrs. Berkeley never was ready at the time, and I'd better wait till she called me. Finding that Mrs. Berkeley was not likely to be ready under half an hour, I came back to my own apartment to hear Hinda's narrative. I found her just preparing her books for conflagration, and as I had re-considered that matter, I vetoed it at once. No books should be burned in my grate, and if when I came home I found any trace of fire there, I should speak to Mrs. Berkeley. In vain did Hinda pronounce me disagreeable, disobliging, altogether savage, and an atrocious creature anyhow. I positively refused, and on going to my closet for my cloak, my wrath was further increased by discovering Hinda's letter-box and portfolio, looking as though it would burst the elastic string, on the floor.

"None of this trumpery can stay here another second," I said; "your letters have caused me trouble enough; I hate the sight of them."

"Why, Mary, you are absolutely fiendish. Nobody will ever mistake the letters for yours now. I am sure you have triumphed enough for one morning. Just let them stay till I have a chance to speak to Dan."

I was not so inhuman as to steel my heart against this request, and Hinda then proceeded to tell me of her conversation with Dan, and its occasion.

"Jones wrote me such a sweet letter yesterday, Mary; you can't conceive," she said; — "the one *you* brought me, and by the way I'm vastly obliged to you for that; but, my dear, it was highly incautious in you to leave it by me on the bed. What if Mrs. Berkeley or Judith had come in before I was awake! Well, my dear, I perceived by the lecture which Dan read you last night, that he certainly supposed you were the culprit instead of me ——"

"Why, Hinda, how could you have heard what he said! Where were you?"

"Oh, never mind *that!* I'm anywhere. Well, dear, you see I knew it would be no use for me to go and tell Dan that I was the one who deserved his lecture, because I gathered that he saw you himself with Jones at some tavern, and he would attribute it to sheer disinterested benevolence on my part, and think I was telling a story to shield you, if I said it was all my fault; and beside that, I did not send you to any tavern to meet Jones, — I would not have had you go for the world, if I had known it.

"I worried so much last night that I began to think I should

not sleep at all. I knew there was no earthly way of showing Dan that I was Petrarch's Laura instead of you, and I thought I would make the best of it. So this morning I sent Reynolds to tell Dan to come to the library before breakfast, and when I had waited there till I was out of patience, he came, looking very sleepy, with his eyes half open, and coughing like a man in the last stage of consumption. He sat down in the arm-chair by the window, and I took another chair beside him, and I told him that I came to see him on a highly important matter connected with Mary.

"He looked a little sad on the mention of your name, and asked me to proceed. I then spoke of the correspondence which you had engaged in with a young gentleman, and of your meeting with him which Dan had discovered."

"And that is what you call making the best of it, I suppose," I cried, in indignation. "*My* correspondence indeed!"

"Don't be so excited about nothing, Mary. The murder is all out now, you know. Your correspondence — well, of course — if you write only one letter, and it is answered, that makes a correspondence, does it not?

"Well, I proceeded to lay before Dan that you had become acquainted with the gentleman in an unconventional way, to be sure, but that you were young, and he ought not to be too severe, and as the young gentleman appeared to be an acquaintance of his, I thought Dan would be acting a wise, as well as magnanimous part, to introduce him to the family. Mary might take some desperate step if he didn't — perhaps run away. You see, Mary, I thought if I could only get Jones introduced to us through Dan, I could go to Dan afterward and confess the whole, and it would answer quite as well. But I began to be quite embarrassed. Dan listened in the most unsatisfactory silence. All he said was, 'Well,' or 'Proceed,' or 'Go on;' and not a word beyond that did he utter. At last, he inquired if it was Mary's wish to have Mr. Jones introduced to her, and I said, — Yes, but Mary felt delicate about asking him, — ashamed, or some such thing as that, and she was doing it by proxy.

"I stopped short after this assertion, Mary, because I was transfixed, not with a sword, but with what was quite as bad, Dan Berkeley's eye! It flashed with transient indignation; then, as he noticed my instant change of color, the indignant expression gave way to one of amusement, — that brightened into a smile, — then Dan laid his hand on my forehead and said, with a jocular air, 'Now, Hinda, look me directly in the eyes, and go over that romance again!'

"Mary, I was fairly daunted; I attempted to repeat the assertion, but I stammered so on every word that I was forced to stop. Meantime, by way of assisting me, Dan went on to applaud my devotion to Mary. Really, such a friend as I he should regard as the greatest of blessings. I had advocated Mary's cause with more earnestness than many a woman would manifest in pleading her own. I perceived then, Mary, that he knew the whole. I covered my face with my handkerchief, spoke in broken tones, and tried so hard to cry that I soon succeeded beyond my expectations. Dan advised me not to make so much noise, — he assured me it would produce quite the same effect, and then I thought it best to make him aware that there were tears in my eyes. He counselled me to make him my confidant, said he was entirely at my service, but his good wishes, of course, would be of no avail unless I told him the truth.

"Then I told him, — all except my having met the adorable Jones at Hoboken; I was ashamed of that, and denied having met him at all. Then I begged Dan to bring the young man here, and introduce him to the family. He told me that I could not be aware of whom I was talking, — the gentleman with whom I had been corresponding was Mr. Ramsay Jones, a person whom he would not be willing to introduce to Mrs. Berkeley and his sisters, and whom he would never bring inside these doors on his own responsibility.

"I was quite provoked at that, after all my confession to be spoken to in that way; and I said if Dan did not do it, I would run away with Jones, or some such thing as that. Dan shrugged his shoulders and said, 'Well, then, run — to the devil, if you like.' I saw that threats would not avail, so I began to cry again, and said I was not in earnest, and should like to have his advice.

"Dan said his advice to me would be, to let him take back Jones' letters and obtain mine. That I did not wish to do. He then said that if I were really in love, and very anxious to meet Jones, he would arrange it all, but I must promise him solemnly never to tell Jones that there was any intention or plan laid to bring about the introduction. Of course I promised; but I do not see how it can be done unless Jones comes here, and Dan says that he never will invite him, — that must be done by Mrs. Berkeley."

I told Hinda that I thought she had acted very unwisely in not availing herself of Dan's offer to recover her letters, but she was altogether too much wrapped up in Jones to agree with me. Further discussion was cut short by Mrs. Berkeley, who called

upon me to attend her. We were out nearly all day, and I was quite fatigued when we reached home. Hinda informed me that there had been an excitement which had frightened her and the servants nearly to death. The chimney of her room had taken fire while she was burning a few books, and there had been an awful scene for an hour. She said that it was immaterial to her whether Mrs. Berkeley knew it or not, since all her letters were safely locked up in the private desk of the obliging Dan.

I was heartily thankful that Hinda's books were not burned in my room, as was originally intended, seeing that my chimney was better stocked with soot, and the conflagration might have been much more extensive. I regretted to find that Hinda experienced such a dearth of excitements, as I feared there would soon be another intrigue on hand.

Berkeley was not in to dinner, and, in the evening, all the ladies went out to a party which I was not well enough to attend. Dan was to call for them in the carriage. As I was on the way to my room, I saw that he sat writing a letter by the library table. I entered, for I had a book to select.

"How is Kassie, to-day, Mr. Berkeley?" I said.

"I have not seen her to-day," was the answer. "She was better yesterday, — out of danger."

I chose the book, and was leaving the room. Dan asked to speak with me a minute. I paused to listen, while he went on to say that he owed me an apology, and could never express his deep regret that it was necessary. His only excuse for his blindness must be, that throughout the past week he had been engrossed ed with another affair. (Yes, I thought, that disgraceful divorce case.) If his ideas had been at liberty, he could not have been so deceived. He acknowledged that he had done me a very great injustice, — it had amounted to actual insult, — he had entertained the most unworthy suspicions of my conduct, that at the most had only been weak, and had expressed them in language of unmerited severity. The sentiments with which he now regarded the matter were such as he never could express.

"Is this all that you have to say, Mr. Berkeley?"

"All that I *can* say. It is for you to tell me if I am forgiven?"

Revenge was too sweet to go untasted. I answered, with a slight shake of the head:

"You might have trusted me, in the first place, though you have probably thought that my accusation formerly brought against you, has released you from the obligation. Appearances were against me. Neither one of us had shown a superabun-

dance of faith in the other. I fear we shall never be any thing but strangers."

"Is this my answer?" said Berkeley, a sort of gloom settling over his handsome face.

"That is it," said I, firmly, and I left him.

Mr. Hervey left town the following morning, not to return till just previous to Judith's wedding, at which he was to officiate as one of the groomsmen. A few evenings after, a large party was given by the Bourdlémes, to which we all went, with the exception of Livy. The Bourdlémes had, for many years, taken a prominent stand among the *élite* of New York (a class looked upon by Mrs. Berkeley as "a great humbug"). Mr. Bourdléme was a descendant of a French family of rank, — had made an unexceptionable match soon after his arrival in America, — and now derived an income from a public office, of which it was the common impression, that every cent was spent. But that was of no account, so long as the Bourdlémes displayed such a splendid equipage on Broadway and Fifth Avenue, dressed so well, gave such parties, and dined and fêted so many foreign and native celebrities. The only daughter in society, Miss Virginia, was nearly thirty years of age, and was one of those who are known in every circle, and whose names are in everybody's mouth, though possessing neither wit, beauty, or any other attraction that might authorize such general favor, save that of being an accomplished woman of fashion.

On the morning of this day, while Judith and I were out, we met Miss Bourdléme, who informed us that the party would be a large one, and there were to be any quantity of lions. We arrived late, found a crowded house, and very few lions, — not so many as Virginia had led us to anticipate.

About twelve o'clock there began to be dancing room as well as dancing, and, as I was coming out of the supper-rooms with Captain Hunter, Hinda met me in the hall, and, in an agitated whisper, informed me, that Jones was there, — Jones himself, and Dan had been talking to him for some time, after which Miss Bourdléme had introduced him to Mrs. Berkeley and Judith.

As I entered the parlor, her words were verified, for, standing by Mrs. Berkeley's chair, in conversation with Judith, was the same veritable, smiling, polished demon of the Seven Horns, — my meeting with whom I had so much reason to regret. Hinda was quite distressed. Mr. Jones seemed to admire Judith, and she begged that I would tell him that the young lady was engaged to Captain Hunter. With this request I could not comply,

Mr. Jones not having been introduced to me, and I soon perceived that Hinda had determined on other means. General Berkeley's sister, Mrs. Ostrander, was at the party, accompanied by a niece and nephew of her husband; and this nephew, who had been quite attentive to her all the evening, Hinda selected as her assistant. She told Mr. Davis, that Judith Berkeley's *tête à tête* with that Mr. Jones must be broken up. They had been talking three-quarters of an hour, and Captain Hunter had looked at them three times. In obedience to the commands of Miss Wriothesley, Mr. Davis introduced Mr. Jones to her, and led off Judith to the dance, and Jones soon found means to dissipate Hinda's uneasiness, by the assurance that it was entirely for her sake he had endeavored to win the favor of Miss Berkeley. The assertion was one I never doubted, and so well did Mr. Jones succeed by dint of talking with Mrs. Berkeley, and waltzing with Judith, — and so extremely attentive was he on every possible occasion, that when he came to hand us to the carriage, he received a very cordial invitation to call at his earliest convenience.

Mr. Jones, who certainly intended to lose nothing by delay, sent, the very next morning, a basket of flowers for Judith, and opera tickets for the whole family. Mrs. Berkeley was gratified, and Judith more than gratified; but, as Dan had other engagements for the evening, and Hunter was out of town, it was found necessary to invite Mr. Jones himself to be our escort on the occasion. This attention found its way direct to Mrs. Berkeley's heart. The evening before, she had happened to mention in the young gentleman's hearing, that she was anxious to hear that opera, but all the boxes and seats were secured before Dan made application at the ticket office. To procure these tickets the young gentleman had been at some trouble, she did not doubt.

In the progress of his acquaintance with the family, Mr. Jones developed certain traits of character which laid the whole fabric open to criticism. He was a great braggart, and paid so little regard to truth that no statement made by him was considered reliable, until otherwise authenticated. The only recommendation that I discovered him to possess, was, that he was undeniably pleasant company, and could be extremely obliging and civil on occasions.

"I see your uncle Dan is in town — at the St. Nicholas," said Mrs. Berkeley to Dan, one morning.

"I know it, — I saw him yesterday," Dan replied.

"Wouldn't you like to ask him here?" Mrs. Berkeley continued.

"Ask him here!" repeated Dan. "What! for you to insult him?"

To this there was no immediate reply, and I was in doubt as to the ultimate fate of the invitation, until somewhat later in the morning, when Mrs. Berkeley announced to Hinda that she was to room with me for the rest of the winter. Her apartment was to be put in immediate readiness for Mr. Dan Hamilton, at the close of whose visit it would be wanted for old Hunter — Captain Hunter's uncle — who was invited up to Judith's wedding. Of course I made no objection to the proposal, though I would have much preferred it should have been any other of the young ladies. In the course of the day Hinda was regularly installed within my chamber, and her clothes, boxes, and bandboxes were holding the lion's share of my closets, shelves, and drawers. During the progress of this removal, Miss Wriothesley was quite confidential regarding her designs on the expected guest. Mrs. Berkeley had pronounced Mr. Hamilton a horrid old wretch, after whose pattern his nephew Dan was cut exactly. Hinda judged he was just the man to marry a pretty young girl, and, — would'nt it be splendid to have a great plantation of niggers, and plenty of money, all her own? In vain did I recall to the fickle soul of the young lady that the course of true love was now, through Dan's agency, running smooth, in favor of the adorable Jones; but Jones' penniless pretensions were not to be weighed in the scale with Mr. Hamilton's negroes and gold-bags. In vain did I represent that, possibly, Mrs. Berkeley would not feel pacific in the prospect of Dan's losing the inheritance which every one expected would be his; and that Dan himself might not be so amiably disposed toward the success of her love affairs when their hero was his wealthy old uncle, as when it was no one more formidable than Ramsay Jones. Hinda paid no regard to any suggestion of the kind, — Oh, Mrs. Berkeley didn't care a straw for Dan, — he was not her own son, — and she hated him too, — would be glad if he did lose the money; and as for Dan, he was very much out of health, — he had a hemorrhage of the lungs three years since, and his cough was wearing him down to a ghost; he would be amiable enough about his uncle's marriage, she was sure. She would try Mr. Hamilton's heart, if he were as old as Methusaleh, — the older the better.

The invitation sent by Mrs. Berkeley through Dan was accepted by Mr. Hamilton for the next three days — the term of his stay in the city. Mrs. Berkeley received him with much politeness and cordiality, and the first evening passed off more pleasantly than I had been led to anticipate, judging from her preliminary strictures on his character, and his well-known dis-

like of her. As for my own sentiments, I confess that I was not altogether prepossessed, but I would not give as infallible, a judgment that was formed and not fully confirmed in the course of three short days. With Hinda's hopes of success I was made acquainted that very night, long before Mr. Hamilton and Dan had finished their cigars in the library. She pronounced him a worn-out man of fashion, thoroughly *blasé*, disposed to be satirical and critical, and, though sixty years of age, was young enough yet to have all his wits about him. His complexion and his devotion to Dan were truly appalling, — she could not decide which was worse; and nothing but his likeness to the Hamilton family saved him from being the most ugly, hollow-eyed, hard-featured mortal she ever had beheld. Yet the physical disadvantages were nothing in her estimation, and in spite of his mental powers, still undimmed, Hinda was quite sanguine as to the result. It would be much better, she thought, on the whole, to marry a man who was not a fool, and who would soon die of old age, than to marry one whose intellect was clouded by a weight of years which did not impair his health.

The effect of her charms appeared to be felt by Mr. Hamilton in the course of the next twenty-four hours. Discovering early in the afternoon that Mr. Hamilton was alone in the dining-room, Hinda put on some extra ribbons and descended. At the close of the next two hours she came up to report her progress. She had held a long conversation with Mr. Hamilton on the subject of her deceased father, Mr. Victor Wriothesley, and had been obliged (as she expressed it) to force a cry. I said that on such a subject I should think she might cry without difficulty, and Hinda alleged that she could when alone by herself, and there was no object to gain by it, but her excitement in consideration of the issues at stake while talking to Mr. Hamilton, had forbidden the possibility of natural tears.

Mr. Hamilton's interest in the fair Wriothesley seemed to intensify in the course of the evening. A single look was sufficient to attract him to her side, and he remained engrossed in a conversation which it was evident she was making as interesting as lay in her power. Hinda glanced several times apprehensively at Dan, but he did not notice the *tête à tête* even by a look. Toward the close of the evening, I perceived that the acquaintance was rapidly progressing, and from these snatches of the discourse that reached my ear, I was surprised to find it already so personal. The conversation having turned on the dark complexion common to Southerners, and Mr. Hamilton remark-

ing that he felt no little pride in that distinguishing mark of his nationality, Hinda enlarged for some time on her unbounded admiration for sombre hues, and expatiated on the beauties of Spanish and Moorish tints with enthusiasm.

Mr. Hamilton seemed somewhat flattered by the compliment, and discovering that he had been something of a traveller, Hinda drew him out regarding the countries he had visited, roaming from the census to the reports of agricultural and mining committees. Not being an auditor to the whole conversation, I was unable to determine the exact course of Mr. Hamilton's delusion, but just as we were all separating for the night I heard him engaging, with much interest, to send her some wasp's nests and specimens of moss and mineral peculiar to the soil of his own State, with which Hinda professed herself quite unacquainted.

"Since you like curiosities, Miss Wriothesley," he said, "I will send up the green and yellow parrots to New York, by the first opportunity, also the robins with the yellow bells, but the robins are stuffed."

"Dead, I suppose," said Hinda.

"Oh, certainly; stuffed robins are apt to be dead. I can send you three specimens."

Hinda expressed her thanks in a manner so unassuming as to veil her triumph most effectually.

"Upon my soul, Dan," said Mrs. Berkeley, when her guest and his fair entertainer had deserted the parlor, "upon my soul, Dan, that girl is setting her cap for your uncle."

"I dare swear," said Berkeley, with a laugh; "I'll tell Uncle Dan to go in for the prize, — he'll win it."

Hinda was in exultation, especially regarding the fortunate episode of the complexion, but that exultation was destined to be of short duration. By an unfortunate inadvertence, on the following day all her visions were effectually dissipated. I had gone to the library, of which I supposed myself the solitary occupant, and had seated myself at a table near the door to write a letter. But I did not long enjoy even my supposed solitude. Hinda followed me to talk, and strayed soon to the subject now dwelling uppermost in her thoughts.

"It will be very easy for me to persuade the old fellow that I marry him for love, or some such thing as that," she said. "You noticed his attentions to me last night. I have certainly made a conquest. Did you hear him promising to send me the box of tomahawks and hornets' nests and curiosities? I wonder if he

knows what a regular curiosity he is himself? He would do for a show. Such jaws and eyes, — and such a complexion! He would distance Othello himself."

"I thought you told him that you adored dark complexions."

"Well, yes; but I don't adore the ace of spades. However I might tolerate it for awhile. If he did not make a will I should have my thirds."

"Dan was saying something," I remarked, "about a missing son of Mr. Hamilton, who ran away to sea ten or a dozen years ago. If an heir should present himself, it would interfere with your calculations."

"Can it be possible? You don't say so! But if he has been missing a dozen years he must be dead. If he looks any thing like old Hamilton, I should think somebody would kill him. But the heir does not trouble me particularly. Then, you see, when Mr. Hamilton dies I can marry Jones."

"Jones might be tired of waiting," I answered, "if Mr. Hamilton should live twenty years."

"Oh, you provoking creature! he can't possibly. He'll be having gout or rheumatism, — I'm sure he will die in a year. How splendid it will be! If Dan only plays the magnanimous, and does not interfere. He is the only heir that troubles me. At any rate, if I don't marry old Hamilton, there's old Hunter, — I'll try him next."

"Don't you think you'd better try old Hunter *first*, Miss Hinda?" said Mr. Hamilton, mockingly, as he slowly rose from the sofa, which had been wheeled before the fire. Hinda was speechless, and Mr. Hamilton continued, as he moved toward the door: "You see the thirds would amount to more, — finer thing for Jones, no missing heirs, and so on, — consider it."

"Good Heavens!" said Hinda, as the door closed on Mr. Hamilton's exit, "I never was so appalled in my life. Mary, why didn't you tell me he was there?"

"I did not know it, Hinda. The sofa stands with its back to me, — Mr. Hamilton was probably asleep when I came in; and I had no object in investigating."

"Well, that's all over now," said Hinda, philosophically, "and I must be resigned. I'm like the poor merchant in the Arabian Nights, who overturned his air-castles with his glass ware."

Hinda consoled herself further with the reflection that there would be no fracas with Mrs. Berkeley and Dan on account of the property; moreover, she had felt some fears of a falling out

with Jones, should he suspect her intention of marrying any one else. On the whole, this incident was quite a relief; and it would serve as a useful lesson when Mr. Hunter came within the sphere of her attractions.

But Mr. Hamilton was not inclined to lay the ghost. He repeated the incident until it had come to the ears of the whole family, and made it the subject of his racy jesting for the remainder of his stay. He felt so flattered! A young and lovely creature would have been willing to console his old age. Fallen in love with him, too, in spite of his jaws and his complexion! His negroes and his acres had nothing to do with it. By the way, what sort of a young man was Jones? He ought to be a person gifted with patience, to say the least. As for "old Hunter," Miss Judith need not suppose that her lover, the captain, who was heir presumptive to that respectable gentleman, ever could have a cent of his money. Suppose Mr. Hunter should leave a will and a widow, — an interesting young widow, who had married him entirely for love, or "some such thing as that," there would be the deuce to pay with the property.

Mr. Hamilton rallied Hinda so incessantly and so publicly throughout the evening, that she assured him she hated him cordially, and would not marry him now if he owned all the gold in Christendom. The hint regarding Mr. Hunter was not thrown away on Mrs. Berkeley, as I discovered by her subsequent conduct.

The next morning Mr. Hamilton was to take his departure. Hinda deliberated a long time, as to whether she should go down to breakfast or not; assuring me that she detested the very sight of old Hamilton, but she feared, that if she did not go down, he would attribute it to the true reason, and might stay two days longer for the sake of annoying her. At the breakfast table, however, Mr. Hamilton had other things to think about. A discussion arose regarding some affairs in California, whither Dan was going shortly to remain for a month or two. Mrs. Berkeley remarked, that she trusted if Dan went out in the course of the morning, he would buy some bitters for his cold: he had kept her awake two hours coughing the night before.

To this Dan replied, that there was no peace for the wicked. Mr. Hamilton's concern was at once exhibited. He inquired how long the cough had lasted, — what Dan had done for it, — what physicians he had seen, and whether there had been any recurrence of the hemorrhage. Mrs. Berkeley informed Mr. Hamilton that the cough had lasted for three months, — that

Dan had done nothing for it, — had seen no physician, — had taken no advice, — and as for hemorrhages, he might have had sixty, and no one the wiser.

Mr. Hamilton rose and walked excitedly about the room. He wished Dan would ride around with him before he should leave, and see some physicians of note. But Dan answered composedly that he was quite well, — there was nothing the matter. Mr. Hamilton advised a course of treatment. Dan responded that it was quite unnecessary, — he should not bother with it.

"The fact is, Dan," said Mr. Hamilton, stopping short in his perambulation; "you must get rid of that devilish cough, or I'll disinherit you, — I will, upon my soul. You'll never touch a penny of my property, — do you hear?"

"All I shall need, probably," Dan replied, "will be six feet by two in the churchyard, and a couple of stones."

Mr. Hamilton was calmed, and remarked, as he resumed his seat at the table: "We will go down and order the tombstones to-day. I did not exactly understand that you were trying to die."

Mrs. Berkeley proceeded to demonstrate that such had been Dan's manifest endeavor for the last four months. Mr. Hamilton continued grave and preoccupied till breakfast was over, when a circumstance distracted his attention from the worn and emaciated face of his nephew. This was nothing more than a *billet-doux*, which Reynolds brought in to Judith.

"Another note from the irrepressible Jones," remarked that young lady, as she opened it. The note contained an invitation to a race the next afternoon. Dan advised Judith not to go. He was sorry to say that she was talked about already.

"A lucky fellow that Jones," said Mr. Hamilton. Hinda was trembling at the allusion, and she drew a sigh of relief, when Reynolds came in to announce that the carriage was waiting.

Mr. Hamilton's adieus did not consume much time. He expressed his acknowledgments for Mrs. Berkeley's kindness at length, and did not spare a few parting words to Hinda.

"You'll try old Hunter," he said, "and if he cannot appreciate his good fortune, just drop me a line, — Dan will give you my address, — I'll be ready at any time. The stuffed robins will come by express, and as you are so fond of black complexions and curiosities, I will send up a baboon for your wedding-present, if I can import one by the happy day."

Much to Hinda's relief, and not greatly to the regret of the other ladies, Mr. Hamilton took his departure.

That evening Jones was expected, but instead of him came Dan, and as the heavy cough sounded from the hall, Mrs. Berkeley called to him to come in and settle a discussion going on about Judith's groomsmen. Judith was fretful. With the exception of Gov. and Jack, there would not be a handsome looking man among them. General Berkeley could not come, and Dan would be obliged to give her away. Davis, Hervey, and the bridegroom were absolute scarecrows. She must have one more handsome man. Dan mentioned Ram. Jones. Judith feared a talk on account of his character. Mrs. Berkeley said she was not going to begin, at this late day, to care about a talk; and the discussion became so severe and protracted, that Dan declared he had not been in such a beehive in a month, and hoped he should not be in such another in three. As he was leaving the room, Mrs. Berkeley said she had been told that he had sold his carriage and one of his horses. Which was it, — Zingara or Azelma?

"Azelma," said Berkeley, "and Zingara goes to-morrow."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Judith, "don't part with Zingara, — sell Dan."

"*Never*," was the emphatic response.

An emotion of pleasure pervaded my heart, and I looked up in gratitude, but Dan's eye had not reverted to me, and he left the room with a gloomy air.

"Heavens, what a racking cough the fellow has!" said Mrs. Berkeley, as it echoed through the upper hall. "Judith, I hope he won't die and break up your wedding."

Judith languidly hoped the same, and her mother went on to say that she knew Dan must be at the last stages in his money affairs. To sell a carriage and two handsome horses, certainly proved it; moreover, she had asked him for a dollar that morning, and he did not have it.

That evening I could not forbear expressing to Livy my wonder, — my positive astonishment, — that Dan censured so severely the intrigue with Jones when he supposed it carried on by me, and spoke of it in unqualified terms; yet, as soon as he was acquainted with Hinda's concern in the matter, he had treated it in a manner altogether different; and after discovering all the manœuvres she had practised, — all the falsehoods of which she had been guilty, — he still had not hesitated to serve her, by introducing Jones to the family.

Livy listened gravely, and then replied:

"Because he loves you, Mary, and he does not care a straw for Hinda."

I gazed at her in utter astonishment.

"Can you be aware," I said, "that he has scarcely spoken to me for a month?"

"I know he never addresses you," Livy rejoined, "but the language of his looks is eloquent."

"I have not caught his eye in a long time," I answered.

"Because you avoid it studiously, but I have seen him look at you, Mary, with an expression of sadness in his eye, that has given me positive pain. Hinda agrees with me that he is in love with you, and I believe you will know it from his own lips before he goes to California."

But for this expectation I could see no grounds, and gave it very little thought. The next morning Dan left the city, and Mrs. Berkeley and Gatty went out early. A letter came shortly after for Judith; and that young lady, deputing me to go in her place to the race with her mother, left the house in haste; and, until the return of Mrs. Berkeley and Gatty, I was the only one of the family remaining in the mansion.

PART III.

JUDITH had been gone some time when Mrs. Berkeley desired me to make ready to accompany her to the race. While in the midst of my preparation, I heard Hinda's ring at the front door. A few minutes afterward, she entered in her walking-dress, her face aglow with exercise, and her manner highly animated.

"O Mary! I've been down Broadway to buy a feather!"

"Well, — what of it?"

"Such an excitement! You can't conceive!"

"I protest, Hinda," I answered, "I am thoroughly sick of your excitements, and, if there is to be another scrape with letters, must positively decline your confidence."

"Oh, don't be pettish. It is not my own affair at all. Judith Berkeley is an awful creature. I could not have supposed it possible had I not seen it with my own eyes."

These last words attracted my attention. I inquired what Judith had done. Hinda made her narration without any reluctance. Judith had received a *billet-doux* that morning, which Hinda perceived to be directed in a gentleman's hand, — Miss Berkeley prepared to leave the house in some haste. Hinda, no less expeditious, was ready to accompany her. Judith manifested no reluctance, joined Hinda while on the search for the feather, then, looking at her watch, said she had an appointment, and bade her companion good-morning. Hinda's curiosity being excited by the idea that Judith was bent on some unlawful errand, she followed her, at a distance, down to the gates of the Jersey Ferry House. Hinda deliberated about entering, as she saw that a boat was just going out, and, while she stood on the opposite side of the way, she was shocked, — horrified, positively appalled, on beholding Judith issue again from the gates in company with a gentleman, — what was more, a United States officer, and neither Mr. Lionel Hervey nor Captain Hunter.

Such conduct on the part of Judith Hinda could not find lan-

guage to condemn. Engaged as she was, — so soon to be married, — to meet a gentleman at Jersey Ferry, and to walk with him all the way up Courtlandt street, and in broad daylight! Treachery such as this Hinda was determined to fathom to the utmost. She followed Judith and the officer up to Broadway, along Broadway and down a side street for several blocks, till Hinda perceived that they were going up a pair of stairs, through what had the appearance of being a public oyster saloon.

She followed, and discovered the pair of stairs to lead to another saloon on the upper story, more retired in its nature, consisting of two apartments, communicating by folding doors that stood apart. Two ladies were already there. Judith and the officer took seats at a table near the window, — Judith in her usual, independent style, and probably actuated by the fear of detection, passed, without glancing at a soul in the room, and seated herself with her back to every one but her companion. Hinda occupied a chair just behind the folding door, and fronting a looking-glass, by means of which she obtained a full view of the gentleman's face. Hinda declared that she watched him entranced, for, without exception, he was the very handsomest man whom she had ever beheld.

"What, handsomer than Ramsay Jones?" said I.

"Oh, yes! altogether different. He has not such a sickly, dissipated look as Jones. His face has so much character, — full of lines, and curves, and dimples, and the expression fluctuates on his countenance like the lights and shadows over a field of waving grain. He smiles and then looks listless, and he looks dark, and then smiles again, — all in the same minute."

"So many phases in the same minute do not argue well," said I. "What is the color of his hair and eyes?"

"His hair is black, and hangs all over his head in something between a wave and a curl. And his eyes are a dark blue, flashing up occasionally with a black light!"

"What's a black light?"

"I can't tell. Pshaw! wait till you see one. Then again, his eye languishes divinely, when it's not flashing, or looking as cold as ice and clear as crystal, which is the predominant expression."

"I am sure it would puzzle an Œdipus," I answered, "to discover, from your description, what sort of an eye the man really has. I dislike a languishing eye."

"No, you don't, — in Dan, at least," said Hinda; you said once you admired that horrible die-away look he has occasionally."

"There is no languishing about Dan's eye at all," I answered, "but no matter, — a truce to the eyes; go on."

"Well, I sat listening to every thing they said, and I heard Judith conversing very confidentially. She mentioned no names, except those of Dan's horses, Azelma and Zingara, but I gathered that she was talking about Hunter, and Hervey, and Jones. Meantime I was thinking how very wicked and unprincipled a thing it was in her to meet a gentleman in this way, and I was hoping Hunter would find it out; only I feared that he might put a ball through his rival, and I thought it a great shame if such a handsome fellow should be shot. The man is certainly no acquaintance of the family, for I have not seen him here at any of the *soirées* or receptions, and I never met anybody like him at a single party we have attended this winter."

"Perhaps he is an old friend," I suggested.

"What 'old friend' is it that cannot call at the house, and that she meets off at Jersey Ferry? No, — no, — Mary! It's a low, vile, clandestine affair in my opinion, and really very serious, — they are already quite familiar. He called her 'Judy,' and 'dear Judy,' whenever he spoke to her, and she said 'my dear,' in the most free and easy way, with every sentence.

"Well, they had some coffee, and brown bread, and little fishes, — that is, they looked like fishes or eels, or some such thing as that. I had only ten cents in my pocket, and I had been saving it to ride home, but I decided to order a cup of tea, as I could not sit there without doing any thing. I stirred the tea, looked at the officer, and pondered the circumstances. I recollected that Judith had been talked about, while at Long Branch with Mrs. Chauncey last summer, for carrying on a tremendous flirtation with a gentleman by the name of Silsbee. But I soon decided that it could not be Mr. Silsbee in the present case, as he was a Boston lawyer, and no officer at all. Then I recollected that there was an officer in town, a relative of the Ostranders, Captain Delaware. He is one of the Bourdlémes' 'lions,' and Virginia said he was a splendid fellow."

"I have met Captain Delaware," I observed. "He does not answer to the description you have given, however, as he has very light hair, and a face entirely destitute of any kind of expression. I did not admire him much."

"Well, I also decided it could not be Captain Delaware, because he is a young man of very high character, and would never be intriguing with another man's intended bride. Really, I could not imagine who he was, but I did not cease to wonder all the

while, that Judith talked on interminably. I thought she never would stop. What under the sun he sees to admire in her, I cannot conceive. She was dressed in horrid taste this morning. I never knew her look worse, and she has grown hollow-eyed and sallow sitting up so late with Hunter; and such a masculine voice, — so disagreeable, — and such a hoydenish, nervous laugh! And, Mary, she mentioned the devil five times. She said her mother would raise him if she did not marry a certain gentleman, — beside, it was too late for a public remonstrance, as the day was set. I believe she means to run away with that officer!"

"I should not be surprised," said I.

"But do you not believe he is sick of the bargain? with such a creature?"

"Such a creature, Hinda! she is a very beautiful and stylish girl, and we cannot be sure that there is any bargain."

"Well, no, — to be sure not. I hope Judith does not contemplate any thing so rash. To proceed. Judith talked for some length of time about her wedding, and, presently, began to cry. Then the officer said a few words in a low tone, intended as consolation, I suppose, for she soon dried her eyes, and was laughing and talking again. When I saw they were about to leave, I drew back close to the folding door, that Judith might not see me. She walked directly through, and the officer was following, when one of the ladies at the opposite tables stopped him to ask a question about the hours when the trains were due on the Hudson road. He took out a time-table and gave it to her, and, as he was passing me, I determined to speak to him too."

"O Hinda! after such a lesson as you have received! How could you!"

"Well, Mary, the truth is, I was *hungry*. I had eaten nothing since breakfast, and it was as much as eleven o'clock then. I should have ordered some tea-cakes if I could have commanded an extra sixpence, but I hadn't it; and I saw that there were two slices of brown bread on Judith's table, so I thought I would ask if I might have them."

"Quite a romantic request," I said, with a laugh. "Did he grant it?"

"Yes, my dear, when he understood it. I stammered so that I could scarcely speak. I was quite frightened, — he looked at me so admiringly. Then he walked back to the table, brought me the bread, and inquired if there was any thing else he could do."

"It would have been more gentlemanly," I said, "if he had

simply complied with your request without asking questions, or making comments."

"Indeed it wouldn't; he made the inquiry in a very proper and respectful way; and then when I said no, he was going off again, but my muff fell and rolled through the door right down the staircase. Of course he had to go down for it, and I made the most graceful acknowledgments possible when he brought it back. It was quite a nice little excitement. I suppose Judith was out of patience waiting all that time."

Judith's infamous conduct was now discussed to some extent by Hinda, while I listened with scarcely a reply. Our *tête à tête* was soon interrupted by a message from Mrs. Berkeley, who sent to say that if Hinda wished to accompany her to the race-course, there would be plenty of room in the carriage, for Livy was too ill to go. Hinda was jubilant over the invitation, as Jones was sure to be there, and Judith was not going.

When we came down the front door-steps, we found Mrs. Berkeley on the sidewalk, and Gatty seated in the carriage. My aunt was holding forth to the coachman, in terms which a sense of decency (it being the public street) alone prevented being violent.

The tails of the horses had been eaten off the night before by the rats, and nothing could have astonished Mrs. Berkeley more, than that the outriders should have imagined that she would have such sights before her carriage. "How could you imagine such a thing, Thomas?" she said. "How could you have had the audacity to suppose it possible!"

Thomas alleged that Mrs. Berkeley had ordered the carriage just in time for him to be punctual at the hour, and the footman stated that he had not noticed the circumstance until the horses were nearly harnessed. Mrs. Berkeley's wrath abated on these representations, but she remained with an undecided air on the sidewalk, contemplating the unfortunate state of affairs. "Strange," she said, "that those horses should have had no more sense than to let those rats eat off their tails." "People on Broadway," she thought, "would stare to see her horses without the usual appendages of such stylish quadrupeds."

In this opinion we all concurred, and what the people on the race-ground would say was next under consideration, when I felt a sudden touch on the arm, and was accosted thus, in a low tone, by Hinda: "O Mary! there is Judith's officer coming down the street! What shall I do!"

I looked around on this announcement, and perceived a gen-

tleman in uniform advancing on the sidewalk. The first look conveyed to me the idea of a grace which I had never seen rivalled, — the second glance showed to me that Hinda's judgment was not without foundation, as the officer was strikingly handsome, — the third confirmed these impressions. By this time Hinda had whispered to me not to stare, and I looked away directly. The officer's tread was on the stones behind us. He stopped, and laid his hand on Mrs. Berkeley's shoulder, while his greeting to her and her daughter was at once affectionate and familiar.

"You hang-gallows dog!" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley. "How dared you go to England without informing me?"

These words were a revelation which caused Hinda to turn pale. The young gentleman, in a good-humored tone, began an explanation of the delinquency. He informed his "dear mother," that he had embarked almost before he was aware of it himself, and had no opportunity of bidding adieu even by letter. In the course of these excuses, he interrupted himself by asking who had shaved the horses' tails.

This question having brought Mrs. Berkeley's attention back to the unfortunate horses, she enlarged on her present troubles for several minutes, with a few expletives expressive of impatience.

"Grow out again, won't they?" queried the officer.

"Yes; I suppose so, but not before the trot comes off at the Fashion Course to-day."

The young gentleman said immediately, that if that was all the difficulty, it could be remedied in a few minutes. She could get horses easily enough, — his were at her service, — he had just bought a couple, and they were at a livery-stable just around in Twenty-seventh street. Thomas could drive around there at once, and have the horses put in directly.

Thomas drove off, and the party on the sidewalk went within the house to await his return. As soon as we were in the parlor, Mrs. Berkeley having introduced her "son George" to the crest-fallen Hinda and myself, inquired when he came in town. He replied that the steamer had entered the harbor early that morning, but some necessary delays had prevented him from coming up town till very much later. Various questions were put relative to his late embassy; some of which were answered by Lieutenant Berkeley fully, others casually. He mentioned having been informed of Dan's absence from town by Judith, whom he had seen that morning. He remarked that Judith did

not look well. Any one might suppose her just recovering from a three months' illness. Mrs. Berkeley admitted that Judith ought to recruit, though there would be no time before the wedding, which was appointed a week from the following Wednesday. She asked her son if he would be in to dinner. It appearing that Berkeley had promised to dine with a friend, Mrs. Berkeley asked if he could not spend the evening with us. He regretted that his aunt, Mrs. Ostrander, expected him at her house in the evening. His mother then inquired if he would come down again the next day.

"I am engaged at the consul's all the morning," said Berkeley.

Mrs. Berkeley was enraged, — in a few minutes she became quite furious. George need never darken her doors again. After all she had done for her children, and all the sacrifices she had made, there was not one who had not repaid her by the most ignominious and ungrateful conduct. George was no exception; he had been influenced entirely by Dan and the Ostranders. It was highly disrespectful to her, to say nothing else, that he should spend his very first evening at his uncle's. "And you are going to stay there, I suppose," she added.

"For a week," replied Lieutenant Berkeley; "but you need not shake the spheres about it. I did not know till this morning that you were in town, and I had already promised Aunt Kassie."

The arrival of the carriage ended further discussion, as Mrs. Berkeley was fearful of being late at the race. As Mr. George Berkeley was about to assist the party in, his mother exclaimed that the horses looked very much like Azelma and Zingara.

"Not very strange," said the young gentleman. "They *are* Azelma and Zingara."

"Have you bought them?" cried Mrs. Berkeley.

"Yes, ma'am. Judith told me this morning they were sold, and I bought them immediately. That duty discharged, I came here next."

"Where did you get the money?" asked his mother.

"That's one too many," responded Berkeley, as he closed the carriage door, and bade Thomas drive on to the ferry.

Hinda took occasion, in the course of the evening, to express to me her great regret for her deportment that morning toward Berkeley, when she met him at the saloon. I said that if she had only asked him for a piece of bread, he would probably not treat the circumstance with any degree of severity. Hinda was

not re-assured. She did not doubt Berkeley's charity regarding that circumstance; but what she feared was, that should any thing connected with her flirtation with Ramsay Jones reach his ear, he would certainly believe it, judging by her flippancy toward him. Hinda was seriously anxious, and not until I had quoted a text applicable in her case several times before: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," were her fears at all lightened.

The next evening which Mr. George Berkeley had not pronounced engaged, he was positively expected, but he did not come.

The day after was Sunday. Being ill in the morning, I was unable to go out until the afternoon, when I arose and dressed for church, not attending that to whose congregation the Berkeleys belonged, but selecting one considerably further down-town. As I was coming up after the service, I was attracted by a crowd at the entrance to the Roman Catholic church in Sixteenth street, named in honor of St. Francis Xavier, and chiefly celebrated for the superiority of its music, and the religious excellence of its priests. The crowd was so great that I could scarcely find my way in. It was the first Sunday in the month, and the Rosary of the Virgin was being recited as I entered. I looked around on the kneeling congregation, every member of which appeared an impersonation of reverential zeal; the spirit of devotion seeming to pervade the very air, as its attitude was assumed or abandoned by the groups of passers in or out. As I listened to the imposing ritual, I forgot the lateness of the hour in my interest, and it was fast verging into twilight when I turned to leave the church. As I slowly followed the tide of passers through the eastern door, I caught sight of Dan Berkeley, who stood, hat in hand, leaning against a pillar at the lower end of the aisle. The light was so dim that I could scarcely distinguish his features; but it was surely he, for he bowed, and shortly joined me on the sidewalk.

"What brought you here?" I asked.

"What brought *you*?" he answered.

"Motives of curiosity," said I. "What were yours?"

"Motives of interest," he replied.

He kept at my side. It was a silent walk, on the whole, for the air was chilly, and I was too much occupied in keeping my cloak around my shoulders, to engage in conversation; nor did I feel, on glancing at his face, that there was any inclination for it in the mind of my companion. As we turned out of Fifth Avenue, I inquired if he felt any predilection for the Romish church.

Dan answered indifferently: "Any church will do to die in," and then changed the conversation, by inquiring what dress I had worn on the previous evening.

"A blue silk," I replied.

"I advise you to wear it again this evening, — George will be down."

Without offering any thanks for the suggestion, I resolved to act upon it.

Mrs. Berkeley waited tea half an hour for her son, who arrived at last with an apology for his late appearance, which he attributed to the fact that he had mistaken the hour. With my new acquaintance I was not altogether pleased on this first evening. It could not be disputed that his features were extremely handsome and very expressive, but the physical superiority was all I could discover. In the course of the conversation, which, on his side, was as strictly non-committal as was possible considering the part taken in it by the others, Lieutenant Berkeley let fall several sentiments, which, from the lips of an older man, would have argued an unsatisfactory trial of the world and its vicissitudes, and the signs of this anachronism sounded to my sensitive ears revolting in the extreme. The freshness, the enthusiasm of youth, seemed to have been banished entirely by the experience of twenty-four years; an experience which had replaced that enthusiasm by an independence and self-reliance of character both unnatural and distasteful.

The next morning I was surprised by a message from Mrs. Berkeley, saying that she wished to see me. On repairing to her room, I was informed that I was desired to make the sixth bridesmaid at Miss Berkeley's wedding. It was too late to ask any young lady out of the family, as would have been done had George's arrival been expected; and Mrs. Berkeley desired me to ride down town with her and purchase my dress, for the preparation of which six mantuamakers had been engaged before daylight that morning, to come on the following Wednesday.

This announcement threw me into very much of a dilemma. Judith came in while I stood revolving what I should do, and I asked her directly if she very much desired me to officiate as bridesmaid. Judith answered candidly, that it made no very great difference to her who was the sixth young lady that preceded her into the church. She thought that either Hinda or I would make a pretty finish to the party, — a sixth couple there must necessarily be on George's appearance; Judith had left to him the choice between the fair Wriothesley and myself, and he had

named me without any hesitation, adding, that he thought it strange that Miss Brandegee had not been engaged to make one of the party, in place of some of the other bridesmaids elect who were nowise related to the family.

I had been a little surprised, at first, by the lieutenant's selection. Apparently, he had bestowed on me only a cursory notice. He had said little to me the evening previous, and nothing at all on the Saturday morning; but Judith's after remark on the relationship explained his decision.

Hinda was not so well satisfied as I. When I came back from the ride with Mrs. Berkeley, I found Miss Wriothesley awaiting me in my apartment, with an air of intense chagrin. She knew all about it from Judith, — Judith had told her the night before, that she intended leaving the decision to her brother, and now she discovered that he had chosen me in preference to her. She could not understand it. She was sure she was quite as pretty, quite as agreeable, quite as attractive, as I. It must have been my music that had charmed him. I reminded Hinda that he had never heard me play at all, and expressed my conviction that his preference was dictated by a sense of propriety, seeing that I was so near a relative of the family. Hinda said that was all nonsense. I was only his uncle's adopted daughter, — no relative at all, any more than she. She confessed that she did not like Mr. George Berkeley nearly so well as she had the first time she met him. His conduct was *outré* in many particulars. He had gone to buy horses on the day of his arrival, before coming to see the members of his own family, and he had kissed his mother and Gatty in the street before the door, though there were six persons passing on the opposite sidewalk, and how many were looking out of the windows it was impossible to say. Of course, he would be willing to do other things quite as bad.

Hinda's tribulations were not limited to this disappointment.

The day following, Dan informed my aunt that the wife of his eldest brother, Mr. Jefferson Berkeley, was in town at the Astor House. Between Mrs. Berkeley and this step-son there had never existed any cordiality. Several times there had been avowed hostility, but as she declared that she always liked his wife, and as Jeff. himself was not in town, Mrs. Berkeley thought it advisable to call on her, which she did that day in company with her daughter Gatty, and myself. Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley was indeed a very lovely person. Our call was protracted to some length, and when we left the Astor House she promised to return our visit very soon. Her husband, she said, was not to be

After several efforts, during which he grew paler and paler, a few slices fell from the blade. I looked at him, scarcely able to realize that this was the man whom I had known in the full vigor of health but a few months before. He persevered until every plate was supplied, then sat down quite exhausted. I wondered that Judith did not notice it, but she was entirely wrapped up in her own reflections; which was quite natural, seeing that her wedding was only three days distant. Hinda asked shortly for another piece of meat, but as Dan essayed to cut it, the hue of his countenance became ashy pale. He dropped the carving-knife, rose, and left the room.

"Ring for Reynolds," said Judith to the servant, "and send him to Mr. Dan."

The order was given in a very careless tone. I wondered how I would have acted if he had been my brother. There was no allusion to him, nor did Judith send to make the least inquiry, until we had risen from the table. The two sisters then went upstairs. A few minutes after, I heard Judith say she had a headache, and was going to lie down, and I waited in the hall till Gatty descended. In answer to my anxious inquiry, she said that Dan had not gone to his own room, but was in his mother's, on the second story; he had assured her that he was quite well, and only desired to be left alone for the remainder of the day.

I hastened up the stairs. Reynolds was coming from Mrs. Berkeley's room. As I approached the door, he looked around and informed me that Dan had given him express orders that no one should disturb him.

"I will be responsible," I answered, and the next moment found me in the room.

The curtains were close drawn, and the light almost excluded. Mrs. Berkeley's low lounge, which usually stood on one side of the fire, had been wheeled back by the windows, and, reclining upon it, his head and shoulders supported on the cushions, the emaciation of his countenance rendered doubly striking by the shades of the darkened apartment, and an unearthly, glassy glitter in his eyes, was Dan Berkeley. As he threw his head back on the cushion and looked up, I saw that the handkerchief on which his face had been resting, was covered with blood.

"I am sorry to be in your way here, Miss Brandegee," said he, while I paused, horror-struck, at the door. "Not supposing that you wished to see me, I told Reynolds to say that I could not receive visitors."

"You need not send me away, Dan, for I shall not go," I an-

swered, passionately. I crossed the room, fell on my knees by his side, buried my face in my handkerchief, and remained silent, struggling hard for self-command. The old, lost, dead affection still held its power, — its memory still was dear, — its reviving impulse outweighed the sense of our long estrangement, — of the coldness, — the absolute enmity which had existed between us. During the next few minutes, while I wept in silence, there was mingled a repentance for the resolute step which had led to this involuntary demonstration, yet I was powerless to move, nor could I trust myself to give a single look.

"Is it the question of the horse you have come to discuss?" inquired Dan, in a sarcastic tone. "He shall be George's property before the sun sets."

This remark increased my distress. I bent my forehead on his shoulder, and exclaimed, in broken tones: "O Dan, you must not leave, while we are still at enmity, — you *must* forgive me, — you must call me your sister ——" Sobs choked my utterance, and, as I found that there still was no response, I lifted my head, and was turning away, when Dan prevented me, putting his arm around my waist.

"Waste no more tears on me, Mary," he said. "I am not worthy one. Look at me, and let me see if Beauty in distress is as lovely as it is represented."

I gazed through the tears which were yet falling fast, at Dan's countenance, on which, as well as it was governed, an expression of pain was predominant.

"Well," I said, as soon as I could command my voice, "how do I look?"

"Very beautiful," said Berkeley, with a low sigh. "Mary, do you recollect asking me, shortly after my arrival in town, a question in relation to that girl Rosanna?"

"I remember it, to my sorrow," I replied.

"You remember asking if I were innocent of a sin of which you suspected me, and my reply that I was?"

"I do."

"I lied like a scoundrel. I was guilty."

"Dan," I exclaimed, with a start of horror, seizing both his hands in mine. "It is impossible. You are dreaming. You can never have been guilty of such an awful crime!"

"The 'awful crime,' my dear Mary, is not what I am apologizing for, — but my cowardice in having denied it."

"Only say you were innocent, Dan, and I will believe you even now."

"My little sister, I say I was guilty, or, rather, I *am* guilty; for things that are past are ours forever. Do not tempt me to repeat such a dastardly falsehood."

I drew away the hand which was resting on his, averted my face, and bent my head, feeling, for the minute, as though I were the one oppressed by guilt, in the presence of innocence: the next brought back with full force the import of Berkeley's confession, and I said, in a tone which my agitation rendered well-nigh inarticulate, "Lucifer, — star of the morning, — how thou art fallen!"

"Yes, Lucifer falls with a very bad grace," Dan responded, "since it appears to be such a precipitate descent. I supposed otherwise, however you heard my conversation with Jones at the Seven Horns tavern: What did you think of me then?"

"I do not know, — I did not think, — I trusted in you to the utmost. The words of your own mouth did not condemn you."

There was a minute's silence, during which I still knelt with my face averted, speechless and motionless. Dan spoke next.

"The fact is, Mary, I am a very bad fellow, — I own it. I acknowledge, frankly, that such has been my universal character. But never has my honor, or the truth of my word deserved impeachment, until I found that it must be sacrificed to retain your esteem. I made the sacrifice; but though that esteem was retained by a falsehood, I withdrew from a friendship which I knew was not lawfully mine. I have been several times on the point of making this confession, but have put it off for a better opportunity. Will you forgive me?"

"What have I to forgive, Dan? Is it I whom you have chiefly offended? This sin is one which cries to Heaven for vengeance."

"I wish to Heaven there were nothing worse that cries for vengeance!"

"Aunt Judith said there was not," I answered, feebly.

"Aunt Judith measures by her rent-roll," said Dan, with a short laugh. "Could I unlock the charnel-house of my breast for your benefit, you would find many a skeleton within, which would vastly temper the grim aspect of this little death's head."

"I could only say," I answered, "that there is so much the more to be repented of, and to be forgiven."

"Mary," he answered, "to-day I bury thirty years. In all probability, before I bury another, some one will have performed that kind office for me; and with what face, — on what plea, — with what earthly excuse, can I offer to the service of Heaven the last few days of such an existence as, for these thirty years, I have led?"

With a trembling voice I cited the thief on the cross.

"That is one instance, — only one given throughout the New Testament," he responded. "It argues nothing, — it was probably the first time that he had the choice; or, as a highly respectable Presbyterian divine once alleged, in setting forth the invalidity of a death-bed repentance, the poor wretch might have been a Christian during his imprisonment, throughout the months intervening his crime and execution."

"We cannot decide *that*," I answered, "nor have we any reason for thinking so. It was one instance, — but an instance still, — given that the living might not presume, that the dying might not despair."

"Well, my dear, I am living still. I will not presume. It would be presumption unvarnished, even with eight or nine months before me."

"Do you think the time so short, Dan? God's will be done."

"The time will not be so long. I shall be vastly astonished, 'utterly appalled,' as Hinda would say, if I find myself alive next August. As for God's will being done, it seems very much out of place to say it over such a small affair as the close of a worthless existence. Resignation is a sublime virtue, but we must presuppose a great loss. Mrs. Berkeley would tell you that no one is the loser but myself."

"Aunt Judith is a heartless woman," I said.

"Not at all. She appears very much worse than she is. She has a few faults, but unfortunately they are very prominent ones."

"So short a time," I repeated. "Do you realize it, Dan?"

"No, Mary; I do not think I do. Some things are peculiarly difficult of realization. Formerly, I endeavored to realize what I am; have many a time shaken up my senses to aid the conviction that I am a living soul; then I have wondered what I was put here for; and now, that I am beginning to understand why I came, and why I stay, my next wonder, is what I am going for. It is said that every atom of created matter has an influence on every other atom. A soul is not material, and when mine has gone — God knows whither — what effect will it have on the universal machinery? Will there be one sparrow the less in the air, — or one cloud the more in the sky? Will it affect the motion of the planets, or distract the purpose of the spheres?

"It certainly will not; or, if every one of equal deserts were

honored in like manner, the universe would be in eternal agitation. I can dispense with the commotion: as nations and generations, one after the other, have fallen by every imaginable death, and under all supposable circumstances, why should I shrink from the aspect of so easy an exit from the earth, as that which, at present, lies before me."

"It is a solemn thing to *live*, Dan," I answered; and I fear you do not know what living is!"

"You think, perhaps, that I am dying too soon! that is a point wherein we cannot agree. In the other point, also, I doubt if we agree. You think I have not lived! Perhaps not; but if to roam for thirty years on this sublunary sphere, homeless and motherless, — to applaud myself one hour for my adherence to a sound and wise philosophy, and curse myself the next for acts of the most insane and ignominious folly, — to endure sufferings all the keener because they were locked in my own heart, and carry on my own shoulders many transgressions which did not justly belong there, — to find the world a great reality, and a great humbug, — to discover that it is roundly abused by everybody in it, and chiefly by its most zealous devotees, — to love it marvellously well whilst in it; and see it inestimably small, now that I look back on it from the borders of the great Unknown, — if this be living, I have lived."

"The world will regret you, Dan," I said, with a sigh.

"Regret me!" echoed Berkeley. "What! the world! That is not the way of it, little sister. The cloud that ascends to-day from the congregated chimneys of this great Babylon, will not vanish before the sunbeam more effectually or more surely, than all traces of Dan Berkeley, and of thousands like him, will melt away forever from the senses of the world, after the distant death-knell has sounded in its ear. And why should it not be so? The world is living, — it *must* bury and forget the dead. We are all in masses here, — we separate, and become individual, as we near the borders of the eternal world. I doubt if, when there, we shall be any better capable of remembering the world than it will be of remembering us. There will be other things to engross one's attention."

"But there are always years of sorrow for those that *love* the departed, Dan! And though the world at large, which loves the least, will forget the soonest, your memory must always live in the hearts of your own family. There are those connected with *you* who will never forget you, — those whose affection you least appreciate."

"Who?"

"Aunt Judith, Dan, — I know she is fond of you, and ——"

I was interrupted by a long laugh from Berkeley.

"Aunt Judith!" he repeated. "Imagine it, Mary. Suppose me enveloped in a winding-sheet to-night, and laid out in state upstairs. George walks in to Mrs. Berkeley: 'Mother, I am going to telegraph for Jeff. to come to the funeral on Thursday next.' 'Thursday!' says mother. 'For God's sake, George, don't keep the poor devil above ground longer than Wednesday, — and Reynolds must serve the notices, — he can't bother with telegrams.'".

I cut Dan short, saying that I could not listen to him any longer, while he indulged in such gross misrepresentation of Mrs. Berkeley.

"See if I have prophesied falsely," said Dan. "You shall be judge. You will probably have the opportunity."

Anxious to turn his mind from these detractions, I ventured a wish that I had been his sister.

"I don't," said Dan. "I thank God my mother never had a daughter. I love my sisters so well as the case now stands, that if any one of them had not been Mrs. Berkeley's child, I should have exerted myself so much to shield her, — should have suffered so much where I failed, — that I should have loved her more than my own soul. She would have been nearer to me than any other created being. The tie between us is strong enough, Mary. I will not disgrace the adoption. When it comes my turn to quit this visible, diurnal sphere, I will resign this fitful fever with a joy that the messenger never shall suspect. I shall not even say, 'Old fellow, you have been a long time in coming.' I shall go without a single regret, except that there may be those who will suffer in lamenting me, little as I deserve it. It cannot be a great while longer. Did you say *you* will suffer? Yes, I dare swear, little sister; I believe it. We must have a little white tomb-stone put up behind that old church in Virginia, for you to go and look at, occasionally, if it won't be too much trouble; or, if my bones are destined to crumble beneath the sands far away from the land of cotton, or sink in some unknown quarter of the sea, you can commemorate the day on which I shuffle off this mortal coil, by saying to your grandchildren: 'That Dan Berkeley was a very sad fellow. I used to know him. It was a good thing for his friends that he died; but it was a bad thing for *him*.' Don't cry, little sister, — that is not what I want. It causes me pain, like all other

spectacles of injustice. A life burnt out in the service of the world, and thrown at last into a forgotten grave, finds an emblem in every cigar that is flung behind a grate, and every rush-candle that falls in the socket. It is not worthy that a drop should bedew your eye-lashes in its honor. I shall say nothing more about this shocking affair of my kicking the bucket. A truce to it."

"My tears, Dan," I answered, as I wiped them hastily away, "were caused only by the reflection that you look so little beyond the grave. Can you see nothing there on the other side of the Dark River but——"

"Nothing but the devil, do you mean? Little sister, I see nothing there at all; and, let me assure you, no sermon you can preach will make my vision any clearer. You can tell me nothing that I did not know before. I have heard the whole story, told in all languages, spoken from all pulpits, — have seen it exemplified in the life and conversation of multitudes, and seen multitudes more, in whom it was not exemplified at all."

"That has nothing to do with *you*," I answered. "There is One who hath said, He will come in and sup with the sons of men. You cannot say that He, who has stood at the door of every human heart, has never come to yours."

"He came, Mary, when my heart was young, — He knocked when the house was thronged with unclean spirits, and the vulture veiled and shrouded, crouched upon the burnished arches. But He waited *so long*, little sister, — and at last, the heavenly Visitant gathered His divine hand within His travel-soiled robes, and went sorrowfully and silently away. It was many long years ago, and He will never come again; yet, oftentimes, the echo of that weary footstep receding from the uncivil portal, seems to linger in the crumbling ruin still. It comes to me when the darkness is very black, — when there is not a ray from one star in the universe, — but I know it is only an echo, for the place is sadly altered. It is a lonely habitation, — the stones are covered with mould, and the walls overhung with tangled vines, — even the gateway is choked with weeds and thistles. I cannot mistake the flutter of the owl and the bat for the rustle of an angel's wing.

"As the tree falleth, so it must lie. The tree has fallen. The energies and faculties which I gave to earth are worn out. I could not give the same to Heaven, any more than the period of years which has gone, — and I would give *all* or nothing."

"Let me remind you of what I fear you have forgotten.

You say that you deserve no forgiveness from God because the freshness of your days has gone, and you have no earthly life to devote to His service. It is little that any one can do, — our works are nothing in the sight of Heaven; and forgiveness, when the power of accomplishing even that little is denied, is the sublimest mercy exercised in our behalf. Can you refuse it?"

Dan's reply was prevented by a violent fit of coughing, and a return of the hemorrhage, brought on, as I was sensible, by the exertion which he had undergone during the late conversation. As, in great alarm, I pulled the bell, I heard Mrs. Berkeley's ring at the front door. Dan's voice had failed him entirely by the time she entered the apartment, followed by the servants, who answered my summons, and as soon as I had given the short explanation which was requisite, she sent immediately for the physician.

"Can I be of any assistance to you, Aunt Judith?" I said, in a low tone, as I left the room. "If he should want me to come and read to him in the course of the day ——"

"You could not come, — you'd finish him off by night. Go along with you, — you have done him harm enough already."

I stopped to give one look at Dan who lay in a state of utter exhaustion, white as the hue of death itself, and gasping for breath with an irregularity that betokened a painful respiration. I left the room to seek my own apartment, where I sat for some time buried in reflections, of which the chief part was regret. I saw Dan Berkeley's character in a new light, and the discovery caused me bitter sorrow that I had not made a better use of my former opportunities.

He did not come below that day, and the next I argued that he was no better, on hearing Mrs. Berkeley remark that she would be obliged to take Hinda to the Astor House herself, in the course of the morning; and, on further inquiries made by the family, she added that Dan was not fit to leave his room, not to speak of the house, and would probably not be able to officiate at Judith's wedding. A little before noon, Azelma and Zingara appeared in harness at the door, and Mrs. Berkeley departed with her lovely charge, whose aspect was far from being amiable.

Jonas Hunter arrived in the afternoon. Judging from my own slight acquaintance with this gentleman, I should have pronounced Mrs. Berkeley's pains to remove Hinda altogether superfluous. I did not suppose that a man, tottering beneath the burden of eighty years, could harbor any ideas of matrimony, though a

young girl should use all her arts to inspire them. Still less could I think that so ardent an admirer of personal advantages in the other sex as Hinda, could be willing, even for the sake of his wealth, to unite herself with one who was so much unsuited to her in other respects. Mr. Hunter was to leave on the day of the wedding.

The next day, Kit Berkeley's arrival was celebrated first. Later than he came Gov., with his two youngest sisters and Jack, and Charles just before the evening. Kit Berkeley and the young ladies were certainly three very ordinary-looking persons, yet I could find no fault whatever with their manners. The girls were very lady-like and intelligent, and I thought their deportment far less exceptionable than that of their elder sisters. There was more refinement of expression, with the ugliness of feature that, to my mind, more than counterbalanced it. Kit was shy in his behavior, and exhibited many traits of character excusable only in boys of his age, — quite excused by me, who made every allowance for the inexperience of a lad of sixteen, who had lived chiefly at school, and at home under such auspices.

Shortly before the arrival of Jack Berkeley, while I was looking among the mass of things belonging to the other girls for some article which I had lost, I recognized Hinda's voice on the staircase, and, a moment after, heard Mrs. Berkeley calling to her to know what she was there for, bidding her go directly back to the Astor, and not to come up there again till she was sent for. Hinda said she had forgotten her boa, and, as she was going to the theatre that night, she should be frozen without it. She assured Mrs. Berkeley she was in no great hurry to return, — she was having a splendid time, — had been sleigh-riding the night before, and had a skating party in prospect for the next day, — quite an excitement all the while. Mrs. Berkeley said she was glad to hear it, bade her get her boa and begone. It was too late for her to be running through the streets alone.

"That Hinda is a little Satan," remarked Mrs. Berkeley to me, half an hour afterward. "She managed to meet Mr. Hunter on the landing, down stairs, dropped her boa at his feet, and the old fool spent five minutes in picking it up with his cane. She had one of the Astor House carriages at the door, and he hobbled out and put her into it."

The next day was that of Judith's wedding. The whole house was a scene of confusion until eleven o'clock, when matters seemed to proceed more in order. I dressed hurriedly, at the last, and a quarter of an hour before the bridal party were to leave

for the church, looked into the room where Judith was under the hands of the hairdresser, and three seamstresses sewing on the wedding-dress, which was nearly finished. The young lady announced that she felt exactly like a fiend, and begged me not to tell any one when I went down how far she was from being ready. I stopped in the hall to glance in the mirror. I saw a figure surrounded by white illusion, which veiled the shoulders and arms with its shadowy covering, — a narrow satin belt defining the waist, — and a trail of flounces on the floor. I saw a very pale face, rendered paler still by the white camelias that appeared through the bands of dark hair. I never looked so well, and I enjoyed the triumph as, on descending the stairs at whose foot George Berkeley was standing, I perceived a look of undisguised admiration in his handsome blue eyes.

"You will eclipse the bride," he remarked, as I passed him. I scarcely smiled in reply. Judith sent down to say that she was nearly ready, and that we were all to get into the carriages without loss of time.

It was certainly a handsome party. The bridesmaids, taken collectively, were not very pretty, but the four Berkeleys, and the remarkable Mr. Jones, were decidedly striking embellishments. The service was soon over. Hunter went through the ceremony in a very calm and collected manner, every word that he uttered being distinctly pronounced; and, as Judith knelt beside him to receive the benediction, I thought I had never known her look so beautiful. My position as sixth bridesmaid brought me so far on the curve of the chancel rails, that I could command a view of every member of the party. I noticed that Lionel Hervey was unusually pale, and his eyes were but once removed from Judith's lovely countenance throughout the service, when they met mine. A faint smile wreathed his lips, which I felt to be a forced one. Though his manner was as calm and impassive as ever, I was sure it had cost him some suffering to witness that ceremony, and I compassionated him from the bottom of my heart.

The reception was very largely attended, — the carriages blocked up the street to the Avenue on either side, and the rooms were crowded for the next three hours with a throng of visitors. Hinda came with Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, and it was not long before I saw her at the further end of the room, in conversation with Mr. Jonas Hunter. This conversation certainly lasted for more than an hour, and it was broken up only by Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley's departure with her fair *protegée*. My aunt had viewed the

tête à tête with disapprobation, but there was no indirect way of ending it that would serve. Dan was occupied with seeing the ladies into their carriages, and the younger brothers were entirely engrossed with their duties as bridesmen.

Mr. Jonas Hunter left a few hours after the departure of his nephew and newly-made niece on their wedding tour; assuring Mrs. Berkeley that he had been most delightfully and hospitably entertained, and promising to finish the visit which he had found it necessary to curtail, at some future time.

The day following, the household was diminished by several of its late members. Jack, Charles, Kit, and the young ladies left early, and Dan took the first Washington train, as he was going to pay a farewell visit to Mr. Hamilton, in Virginia, before his departure to California, — an event fixed for the following Wednesday. Gov. was to leave on the Saturday previous.

"If Hinda is going to-night with me to Mrs. Preston's," remarked Mrs. Berkeley on that Friday evening, "she ought not to have been chatting with Fan Douglas opposite Legrain's as late as six o'clock. If she is not here by eight, I shall go without her."

But Hinda came up from the Astor in time to go with our party. She was in excellent spirits, consequent on the full conviction of her good looks and the perfection of her new toilette. Was Lieutenant Berkeley going? Could we be fully *sure* of that? Nothing was wanting to complete Hinda's exhilaration. Gov. and the lieutenant both were going, and the latter was in the carriage with her and Gatty. Mrs. Preston resided in Waverly Place. She was a lady of whom I knew absolutely nothing except that she never gave large parties, but always very pleasant ones, and that Hinda had visited her before my arrival in the city. Mrs. Berkeley ordered the carriages as late as one o'clock.

"What under the sun can Jones be here for?" said Hinda to me in the dressing-room, in accents of dismay. I thought she must be mistaken, but on entering the parlor, I perceived Jones to be there, *in propria persona*. I had not seen him since the wedding, and though that was only two days previous, the young gentleman took occasion to seek out our party and to express his regret that so long a time had elapsed since he had had the pleasure of seeing us. I perceived that he appeared to be very much at home at the Prestons; a fact which I could not explain until informed that he was a near relative of the lady of the house. Hinda's pleasure was not altogether unalloyed throughout the evening. She waltzed several times with Lieutenant Berkeley,

and twice with Captain Delaware, much to the chagrin of Miss Bourdléme, — but she had torn her dress, and was under continual apprehensions with regard to Jones.

"Mary, I do wish you would try to keep Jones away from that punch-bowl in the hall," she said to me, in accents of despair. But to divide Jones and the punch-bowl was altogether past my ability, and, fully conscious of that fact, I did not attempt it. Hinda at last, in desperation, took the matter into her own hands. She sent Captain Delaware to tell her former admirer, that she wished to see him, and, for the next half hour, Jones' attention was effectually distracted from every thing but her. Notwithstanding the success of this attempt, Hinda did not appear altogether at ease. She seated herself on a sofa in the corner, and fanned herself languidly, while Jones continued his unremitting devotion. At last she retired to the dressing-room, and sent for me to follow. I found her in some mental distress. Really, she did not know what to do with Jones. There was no getting rid of him. He was unreasonable and jealous, and had threatened to shoot every gentleman with whom she had danced in the course of the evening. I thought it more likely that he was tipsy, but, at all events, the mental condition of the said Mr. Jones was not to be envied.

By twelve o'clock the chief part of the company had dispersed. Mrs. Berkeley, who was extremely tired, and had been told that Hinda was quite ill, informed George that she should not wait for the carriages, but would go home in an omnibus, if he or Gov. were ready to accompany them. The lieutenant went down stairs to find his brother, and expressed his own readiness to go, with an amiability which was all the more extraordinary, seeing that he had been the star of the evening. As we were coming down from the dressing-room, Jones accosted Hinda on the stairway with some petition, which he repeated several times, and her reply was given with some asperity: "No, indeed, you silly man; I cannot think of such a thing."

There were no omnibuses in sight when we reached the corner of Broadway, and the lieutenant, who had given his arm to his mother, crossed on to Fourth Avenue to wait for the cars. As we stood on the corner, we were joined by Jones, who had followed us through the block. He professed to have an engagement at Bull's Head; he was going up there. He'd be hanged if he wasn't.

This observation was made in so low a tone as not to be audible to either of the other gentlemen, and as a car at that minute

appeared in sight, neither one had leisure to observe Mr. Jones's unusual manner. The car was quite well filled. Seats were available only for the ladies of our party. The two gentlemen were standing, and Mr. Jones walked forward to the front of the car, where I devoutly hoped he would remain.

But the young gentleman had discovered two acquaintances in the car, seated near the post where he was stationed, with whom he fell into conversation, and the incidents of a late billiard-match were the subject of discussion. "By Jove," quoth Jones, "Grooms made a carom that I knew would knock Fleming's game in the head, — I knew it would, by Jove!" In this style Mr. Jones proceeded to discourse until the conductor came up for the fare. After some minutes' fumbling, Mr. Jones produced a ten dollar bill. A discussion ensued, during which the young gentleman grew somewhat excited. No one ever had dared to impeach the validity of a cent which had found its way into his pocket. "I'm Jones," he said. "Everybody knows Jones. Ask anybody who Jones is, and he will reply at once, 'the best-natured, most generous, clever-hearted fellow in the universe.' I'm everywhere, sir, and I know everybody. I say I am Jones. Now then, sir, will *you* have the goodness to say what is the matter with that ten dollar bill? It's a bill on the Chemical Bank, and if you say that bill is bad, I'll see the Board of Directors to-morrow, sir, and the President will make it a personal affair."

The conductor replied that the bill was good, but that he was unable to change it. Jones grew more excited still. "I'll stand the hazard of the die," he exclaimed. "I'll submit it to any gentleman in the car. Berkeley, will you oblige me by looking at that bill? Is that bill to be called bad by anybody? Harris, will you have the goodness to give me your opinion of that bill?" Mr. Jones carried the bill to every gentleman in the car, receiving a universal affirmation in answer to his question, "Is it good?" He turned back to the conductor. "I'll stand the hazard of the die," he repeated. "I'll hang you on the nearest tree. If you say I lie, you may do the same to me. Take the bill, you ungentlemanly scoundrel, — take the whole of it, sir, — I insist upon it. I'll hang you on the nearest tree."

Gouverneur Berkeley now handed Mr. Jones's fare to the conductor. But that gentleman's loquacity was not checked. "I say I am Jones," he continued. "And I'd like to inquire who the devil *you* are, that refuse a bill on the Chemical bank. I've been a much abused man, —I'm a very ill-used man, sir; but this is the unkindest cut of all. Harris, I'm Ramsay Jones,

whose name has been most infamously connected with the Brancton divorce-case, and most outrageously represented in the miserable, contemptible, journals of the day. Harris, my dear fellow, you know me, — I'm no less a person than Jones. As I was saying, the New York Times is the only paper that gave a fair, unprejudiced view of that matter. The next witness called was Ramsay Jones, — you understand, Harris, — the next witness was Jones! This witness was intoxicated, and the clerk led him off the stand. That was the first trial, — no I mean the second, — the first came after the second, — the next witness was Jones! It's a very efficient view of the case, sir! What street is this? Sixteenth street, eh? Well, I'm going to Bull's Head. What's that, Harris? Car don't go through the tunnel? I'll stand the hazard of the die. I'll get through the tunnel to-night, or lose my life in the attempt. I'm an ill-used man. A lady in this city has treated me as she would not treat her lap-dog. What do you think she did? Lord bless your soul, she hasn't done any thing! Oh, no, nothing. It's nothing, is it, to send a man forty letters, to meet him six times at Hoboken, and twice at Hunter's Point, to say nothing of three times when she made him wait in Lapland, walking about through the ice till he was frozen. I'm not saying she did it! No; I wouldn't be such a dishonorable villain as to betray any lady; but to be encouraged, and made love to in that way, when it means nothing; it's — it's the devil — and no mistake. I asked her three times this very night to marry me to-morrow, although she — she — she's a little tipsy, and hasn't a cent to pay the clergyman except a ten dollar bill on the Chemical Bank. Clergyman couldn't read the name, and refused to take it. I shall hang him on the nearest tree. She said I was a silly man, and she could not think of it! If my pistols were in order I should shoot myself to-night. I will, — I'll shoot myself, and all the other villains at Bull's Head. As for that young lady she is in this very car, gentlemen. She came in at the same time with me. That is, she followed me in, for she worships my shadow. Lieutenant Berkeley, you are a fine fellow, and adored by all the ladies, will you tell me why it is that one woman is so much like another? You can't! is it possible! Well, sir, I can tell you, — it is because they are all alike, and all false. Don't trust that young lady, sir, — she will treat you as she treated me. Harris, beware of that young lady. She will tell you, at the last, that she never thought of such a thing. 'Mr. Jones,' she will say, 'I protest I never *thought* of such a thing.' I am going up to Bull's Head to shoot

myself. Harris, she sits on your side of the car, or on the other, —she don't know which, — we are going through the tunnel now, and it's dark. She is one of General Berkeley's wards, and a ravishing beauty. I would not tell her name for the universe, for she is Miss — Miss — Lieutenant Berkeley, let go my cravat, you are choking me, — you'll smash my collar. Drunk, did you say? you are drunk yourself, sir! you took a bottle of champagne, and ten glasses of punch. Put me out! I don't see it, sir, in that light. I'll stand the hazard of the die, and when I meet you down town, I'll hang you on the nearest tree, — I'll knock you into a cocked hat ——"

Further remarks on the part of Mr. Jones were here prevented by his expulsion from the car; an operation effected by the united forces of Lieutenant Berkeley and the conductor. Hinda, who had been trembling like an aspen leaf during the course of her late lover's demonstration, now began to breathe freely, as I saw by her returning color.

Mr. Jones' ungentlemanly conduct was made the subject of the most severe animadversions on the part of the young ladies, so soon as the privacy of four walls had given us license to notice it. They were all very sure that he never would venture to show himself where there was the least danger of meeting any witness of this degrading exhibition. The most unsparing in condemnation was Hinda, and I was astonished to see with what wonderful indifference she indulged in comments on remarks whose possible developments she had the chief reason to dread.

While Hinda was undressing in my room, and consulting with me as to which of the robes in the closet she should wear to the Astor in the morning, Livy came into the room to express to Miss Wriothesley her great concern that Mr. Jones's developments were to be passed over. Hinda said they should not be. She would have an apology the very next day, or cut Mr. Jones's acquaintance. Livy responded, that that was not what she meant. Here were Gov. and George Berkeley both undecided as to whom of General Berkeley's three wards Mr. Jones's strange statements related. Livy was extremely surprised that Hinda had not taken them aside on their entrance within doors, to take the blame of the whole matter on herself. To let it rest would be gross injustice both to her and to Mary. I said frankly that I did not see the necessity of Hinda's making any such confession. Gov. and George would probably think it all the work of Jones's inebriated imagination. Livy said she felt assured to the

contrary, for she had just heard Gov. ask Mrs. Berkeley which of the young ladies it was that had been flirting in that way with Jones, and Mrs. Berkeley replied that she had nothing to say, — she was going to hush the matter up. Hinda said that undoubtedly Jones would say the next day, that none of us was the culprit. Livy replied that such a falsehood on the part of Jones could deceive nobody. "I'm sure, Livy," said Hinda, angrily, "I don't see why *you* can't be content to let the thing alone. Neither Gov. nor the lieutenant will ever imagine that it is you whom Mr. Jones styles a 'ravishing beauty.'" This remark did not tend to Livy's pacification. It was very unjust toward Mary, she said, and if Hinda did not promise to tell the gentlemen the truth before she went down the next day to the Astor, she (Livy) would tell them herself, as soon as Miss Wriothesley was gone.

Hinda said she would tell them, sooner than allow Miss Schermerhorn to make herself such a despicable carrier of tales, and bade her leave the room. "To think, Mary," she said, as she closed the door, "that all this should have arisen out of such a little affair as an innocent excitement. To think that Jones should be such a drunken fool, and Livy such a fiend."

In the morning, Gouverneur was gone long before the others of the family were up, consequently, the disagreeable task to which Hinda looked forward, was curtailed by a very formidable half. Livy was determined that the remainder should not be neglected. She sent Reynolds herself to tell Lieutenant Berkeley that Miss Wriothesley wished to see him in the library, and watched over the balusters till Hinda's flounces vanished through the closing door of that apartment.

The interview lasted until the announcement of the carriage, which was to take her back to the Astor House. As we attended her to the door, and I received her parting professions of attachment, little did I dream of the extent of her treachery! I did not imagine the shade of coldness perceptible in George Berkeley's manner toward me, could be attributed to any thing beyond a pre-occupation, which was the natural result of Hinda's confession. Little did I dream that her first act, on returning to the Astor, where she found the penitent Jones awaiting her return, was to enjoin him, on pain of her everlasting displeasure, to go directly to Twenty-third street, and, after offering his apology to the whole family, tell Mr. George Berkeley, privately, that his mysterious remarks were not to be considered called for, by any act of indiscretion on her part. I was so far from sus-

pecting that Hinda had represented that morning to Berkeley, that it was solely for dear Mary's sake the secret must be kept, that when the inevitable Jones came to make his apology in the evening, and having spent half an hour in describing the overwhelming sea of penitence in which he had been drowning, and the fires of remorse which had consumed him throughout the day, to the propitiated ears of the ladies in the parlor, I did not attach the slightest singularity to the circumstance that he sought Lieutenant Berkeley next, as I only supposed him anxious to discover how far he had committed himself. I did notice, however, that Lieutenant Berkeley regarded me quite pensively during the evening, and an inexcusable vanity led me to attribute it to a very flattering cause.

Monday morning, Miss Wriothesley's career at the Astor was suddenly brought to a close. A letter arrived for Mrs. Berkeley, and as her eye-glasses were cracked, and had just been sent out for repairs, it fell to my lot to read the note. It opened, "My dear mother," was signed "Sidonia Berkeley," and set forth the lady's great regret that Miss Hinda's behavior was exciting so much remark, as to demand Mrs. Berkeley's immediate knowledge of the unhappy circumstance.

She had been sleigh-riding every day with a gentleman whose character was not unexceptionable. She was in the habit of entertaining young men in the parlor for hours together, against her chaperone's positive advice. She was away on skating parties, riding parties, parties to the theatre, and was going to-day on a tomahawking party at some gymnasium. Mrs. Berkeley professed herself sorry to say all this, as Hinda was a pleasant girl, and both she and Jeff. liked her very much, but an imperative duty demanded the avowal.

"I reckon that Jeff.'s liking for Hinda is at the bottom of it," said Mrs. Berkeley, laughing. "Go on, Mary, is that all?"

There was a postscript couched in these terms: "I forgot to say, that *Mr. Jonas Hunter* has been here for three days. He seems quite attentive to Hinda, and has bought a wig. Your affectionate daughter, S. B."

"Oh, the deuce!" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley. "Ring, Mary, and order the carriage right away. I'll break up her tomahawking! I'll have her home, and shut her up, if she does not behave herself better. Bought a wig, has he? Good Heavens, who *could* have foreseen it!"

Hinda's return was soon effected on the spur of this necessity. The young lady was in a very bad humor, and indulged her

wrath against Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley in no measured terms. The next day Dan returned from his visit to Virginia. I had been down town all the morning, and was not aware of his arrival until he greeted me at the head of the staircase.

"Are Dan's trunks so nearly used up that they will not hold together without cords?" Gatty asked her mother. "Why does he not buy a new set?"

"The old ones will last as long as he will," replied Mrs. Berkeley. Dan shrugged his shoulders on this heartless rejoinder, and called to his step-mother to say that he was going out.

Lionel Hervey was there to dinner, and when we had played through a game of whist Dan came in. He looked tired and worn, and from the odor of his apparel, I judged he had been smoking. He sat down beside me, took up the cards, and joined the game with some spirit. At ten o'clock Mrs. Berkeley rang for wines, and while we were still sitting at the table, a conversation arose with regard to Lord Byron. Mrs. Berkeley, Hinda, and Gatty, were severe in denunciation of that unfortunate nobleman. Dan at last took down a volume of Byron's poems from a bookcase, and, after a little preliminary explanation, read aloud the "Fare Thee Well," which neither his sister nor I had ever met with. All my sympathies were awakened, and I exclaimed, involuntarily:

"And yet she left him! How could she?"

"Don't I tell you that he was a very bad man, child?" said Mrs. Berkeley.

"I care nothing for that, Aunt Judith!" I exclaimed; the enthusiasm of my feelings carrying me beyond the bounds of calmness. "Had he been the most cruel or the most immoral man in the world, and yet had written such poetry as that, addressed to me, — had known one hour, though it might have been only one in which he could have so felt, and so have spoken, I would never — never have left him; or, having done it, I would have gone back on the wings of the wind."

Mrs. Berkeley said she did not doubt that I would have been just such a fool. The young ladies laughed at, and bantered me, on what they termed misguided enthusiasm. Lionel Hervey sat with his eyes cast down on the cards before him, and Dan turned over the leaves in silence. In the mean time the young ladies proceeded to the discussion of other matters, and Mr. Dan Hamilton's name being mentioned, Mrs. Berkeley brought to light the fact that Mr. Hamilton had been married once, but

his wife had died a few years after her marriage. "Fool," said Mrs. Berkeley; "what could he expect. She was dying of consumption when she was married. No one thought she could live a month."

Mr. Hamilton's folly was commented on both by Livy and Hinda so severely, that I felt called on to say a few words in his defence. It only showed, I said, that Mr. Hamilton loved the lady, and I was sure, if I loved any one, I would marry him though I knew he would die the next day.

"*What*," exclaimed Dan — in a tone which I never shall forget, should I live a thousand years — "what was that, Mary?"

Mrs. Berkeley forbade me to repeat my silly remark. It was very much out of place, she said, for me to express myself in that manner. As I turned away from Dan's searching eye, I met the gaze of his brother, who had drawn off to the fireside at the conclusion of the game. Lieutenant Berkeley's face wore the same expression that I had noticed thereon the morning of Hinda's communication regarding Mr. Jones, save that his brow was more ominously clouded.

As soon as Hervey had taken his leave, Dan, observing that he had some letters to write and accounts to settle with which the cards had interfered materially, retired to the library. I waited late in my own room till he should pass the door, but when twelve o'clock came and brought no sound of any foot-fall, I determined to go down to the library and bid him good-night.

On entering that apartment, I perceived that it was tenanted by both the brothers. George was looking over a file of papers, — Dan was lying on the sofa. As I was withdrawing, he called to me to come in.

"I only came to say good-night," I stammered, as I approached. He made room for me to seat myself beside him on the sofa, and I did so.

"If that is all, it is very soon said," answered Berkeley. The words which I strove to utter faltered on my tongue, and my embarrassment was further increased on perceiving that George Berkeley was withdrawing from the room.

"You will find those receipts in my desk, George," said his brother. "The key is on my dressing-table." The lieutenant left the room, and I saw him go with a sinking heart. Dan's diamond-bright eyes were riveted on my face, and I shrank with an ill-defined dread from their gaze.

"I should have sent for you in the morning, Mary," he said, "but to-night will do as well. I am going to tell you a secret,

which I did intend should be buried with me, and ask you a question which perhaps you would prefer to hear from other lips than mine. Mary, do you love me?"

"Yes, as my brother."

"Only as your brother, Mary?"

"Yes, Dan."

"Never as any thing but your brother?"

"Never, Dan."

"Was there never a time when, had you asked your heart the question, it would have answered that you might have loved me?"

I did not reply.

"And who has come between us?" questioned Berkeley, in a lower tone. "Who is he, Mary, — tell me his name? What David is it that robs Uriah of his only lamb?"

I was speechless; too painfully embarrassed to reply. Dan turned his face to the cushion, while a sudden tremor shot through his whole frame. It lasted but a minute. The spasmodic quivering was subdued, and, as there were no words at my command, I sat in silence, my face covered with my hands. After a few minutes, Dan again addressed me with a calmness that was maintained with difficulty, and in a voice that sounded strangely hollow.

"Mary," he said, "I am a mariner, who, nearing the borders of an unknown shore, has, within the last few minutes, seen the star which illumined the midnight of his soul go down forever in the waves. I have revealed my secret; you know that amid this stranded wreck of humanity there is something human left, — that in the ashes of those hopes which lie blasted, there is a spark that trembles still. Now I must ask you to forget it, — whenever my name comes to your ears or my image to your heart, forget, my darling sister, that he who asked you for a sister's love, ever dreamed of any other."

Berkeley struggled up to a sitting posture as he spoke, and, when partially recovered from the shortness of breath which the effort cost him, he continued:

"You see, Mary, I must resign you to those who are younger, and perhaps wiser than I. Grant me one more favor, little sister, — it is the last I shall ask. You cannot refuse it; when this poor dog of a Dan is in his grave, there will not be in your heart a shadow of a regret that you suffered one last caress of affection even from such sinning lips as his."

I still sat with my face buried in my hands. Dan went on.

"Little sister, this *Memory* is the devil. She calls visions

round one's pillow worse than any night-mare, and there is no shaking them off; there they revolve on an axis as unerring as the earth's, — they pass in panorama unceasing as the clouds, — the train blackens and elongates, and winds its endless way till 'the trail of the Serpent' is over all the fairest flowers in Eden, and his hiss envenoms the sweetest melodies of a seraph's harp. I only ask one recollection which shall hang on the pall spread by that fiend, 'like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear!'"

"You hesitate! there was a time when you would not have forbidden me a score of such caresses, and now you make me plead for one. Years, — aye, centuries hence, — when, on the other side of the Stygian River, severed eternally from earth and the being whom I love as my own soul, I look back on this parting moment, and recall the little favor for which I sued like a slave to an empress, am I to think of it only as refused?"

I looked up. Dan's dark eyes glistened for a moment, then two bright tears gathered on their lashes. "Never mind, my little sister; I will not ask you again," he said, as he withdrew his arm and turned away.

"I should be untrue to myself if I could refuse you," I answered. The shadow disappeared from Berkeley's brow. He turned my face to the light, — gazed for a minute intently on my features, then folded me in his arms, and pressed his lips to mine.

I disengaged myself as George Berkeley's footstep sounded on the stairs. The next moment he reëntered with the receipts, and sat down by the table to look them over.

"Come here, George," said his brother.

George looked a little surprised, but obeyed immediately. "I am going to give you this little sister of mine," said Dan, "to be under your guardianship until my return. This young lady needs protection, not only by reason of her innocence and youth, but because, from her strict sense of honor, she will suffer for the faults of others, no matter under what imputation she is laid, — no matter how far the suspicion is carried."

"Ah!" ejaculated the lieutenant, regarding me with an attentive air.

"Will you promise me," Dan continued, "to place an unflinching confidence in her under all circumstances?"

"I promise it, certainly," said the lieutenant, as Dan gave him my hand. George Berkeley's eye was still fixed gravely on my face. "Perhaps, Dan," I said, "your brother may find it too weighty a responsibility."

"Who the deuce cares what he finds it," said Dan. "Under-

stand, George, you are to fill my place as well as you can, which, I trust, will be better than I have. You are to believe this young lady true, though it involves the necessity of believing all the rest of the world false. If she tells you black is white, you are not to question it, and if she says she was never in a place in which you have seen her, you are to discredit the evidence of your eyes."

This unbounded confidence in my veracity put me to the blush. I felt that I did not deserve it, and I fancied, from George Berkeley's air, that it was his opinion that more was expected of him than he felt at liberty to promise. As I attempted to withdraw my hand from his, he answered his brother with some flippancy. "I'll do it, — I'll serve Miss Brandegee like a lover, — love her like a brother, — and regard her word as positive gospel. I promise it, solemnly."

I bade them both good-night, and escaped from the room. There were a few words yet unsaid, with which I had hoped to charge Dan Berkeley's memory, but reflecting that he would not leave till eleven o'clock the following day, I decided to defer my parting injunctions till the morning.

Anxious to lose no opportunity, I rose by daybreak. The servants were just moving when I came below. Early as it was, however, Mrs. Berkeley was up before me, and I ventured to suppose that Dan would not be down for some time.

"He has been 'down' all night, in the library," she rejoined. "I saw a light there till three in the morning. Don't go in there now, for he is fast asleep."

I suffered an hour to elapse before venturing to disobey this injunction. As soon as I thought I could effectually evade Mrs. Berkeley's notice, I repaired quietly to the library. The gas light, though turned very low, was burning still, its light quite dim in the rays of the morning's sun, which was just breaking into the room. The fire in the grate was entirely out. Several letters lay upon the table, and Berkeley, reposing on the sofa with a great coat thrown carelessly over him, lay sleeping. I came up and gazed into his features. It was not a broken, fitful slumber, — not the restless sleep of sickness, — not the sweet oblivion of innocence, or the grateful rest of weariness, but a heavy, dead unconsciousness, utter repose of lip and eyelid, in which even the circumstance of breathing seemed remote, — a state as much akin to the last great sleep, as any wearing the form of life can be. As I gazed, with a solemn feeling at my heart, on the features of the slumberer, and compared their lively, ruddy hue of the previous summer, with the reduced and emaciated aspect which they

now presented, rendered still more ghastly by the discolored light that fell upon them through the curtains, there arose to my mind the verse of the anthem in the Burial Service: "When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, Thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity."

A low movement at my side attracted my attention. I looked around and saw Mrs. Berkeley.

"I thought you would be prowling around," she said. "Go draw the shade of the window yonder, and keep out that sun. I want him to sleep to the last minute if he will." I obeyed in silence. She stood for some minutes longer, gazing on the face of the sleeper.

"Immense power of vitality," she said, at last. "An ordinary man would have died, at this rate, three times over."

"It is sad to have him go in this condition," I said.

"What condition! I am sure it is not bad."

"Do you think he looks well, Aunt Judith?"

"No, — he does not look well, — but he looks very much better than he did a month ago. He is good for two years yet. There's no die in him."

We left the room together, and I began to fear that I should have no opportunity of bestowing my parting admonition on Dan. How he slept through all the confusion in the house for the next four hours I could not understand. At ten o'clock George went to the library to arouse him. At breakfast every one was present, and afterward there was no opportunity for private interviews; for, busied with the final preparations for his departure, and directions about trunks and desks and old clothes, Dan was upstairs and down, and in no one place for three consecutive minutes. Germain had come in to ask his master some question about the transportation of the horse which I had given him, and, as soon as he had taken his departure, Dan went up for the last time to his room, to see if there was any thing there forgotten. I availed myself of the opportunity. At the head of the winding stairs I met him just descending from the flight above.

"One word," I said, seizing his hand, "before you go. Hear it as from a sister's lips. I will speak it quickly."

"And I am to weigh it at leisure. Well?"

"It is only to ask you to have mercy on yourself, — to act no longer as your own enemy; and now that you are going to commit yourself to the waters of the great deep, take the time of your isolation from earth to prepare yourself for heaven."

"Have you a nice little hymn-book to give me as aid to my solemn meditations among the sea-horses and whales?"

"Can you answer me in no other way, and at this moment, Dan?"

"At this precise moment I cannot. Since you are not provided with a hymn-book, you must have at least a tract. What! not even a tract! You don't say so!"

He was going on, but the look worn by my features arrested his progress. "Mary," he added, "have I not already told you that I have known this subject presented in every imaginable way and manner? I am not a mad, insensate fool. I have some reason, — some understanding left."

"Then you do not use it. One moment, Dan, — one moment only, I ask; — there is one manner in which you never yet have been addressed on this subject. You are now asked to think of it, — only to *think* of it, by one who loves you with the entire, the undying devotion of a sister!"

Dan's countenance changed. "That *does* alter the case," he said. "I *will* think of it."

He went down, and I followed soon after. In the door of the parlor stood Hinda. Mrs. Berkeley was within. Dan stood at the furthest window with his arm around the waist of Gatty, to whom he was talking in a subdued tone. George was drawing on his gloves in the hall.

The clock struck eleven. Dan came out of the parlor, followed by his sister. He put on his overcoat and took his hat from the hat-stand. "George, are you ready?" "All ready."

Dan turned to Livy. The gentle, kind-hearted girl gave him the assurance of her kind wishes for his safe journey and future happiness with a faltering voice, and, as she received and returned his kiss, I heard her say, "I shall probably never see you again, Dan. You will not be home in nearly a year, and I shall not be living then."

Dan's answer, light as it was, was replete with the warm esteem that he felt for her character, a respect for which I would gladly have exchanged all my dearly-bought experience. Hinda came next. She gave him her hand with a few heartless words, drew back, at first, when he offered to kiss her, but, on a look from Olivia, suffered the salute.

"Good-by, Gatty," said Dan, as his sister threw herself into his arms. "Don't get married till I come back to give you away." (An injunction, by the way, which Gatty literally obeyed.) The concluding words of the parting charge were whispered in the

ear of the sobbing girl. I thought it would now be my turn, as I stood next to Gatty, but, as the young lady was released from her brother's affectionate embrace, Mrs. Berkeley advanced from the parlor.

"Oh, *this is* 'the most unkindest cut of all'!" said Dan, as he turned toward her with a laugh. "Mrs. Berkeley, I bid you good-by."

"Good-by, Dan, — good-by, old boy," she said, with a warmth of manner which I had not anticipated. "Take good care of yourself, and don't die before the time comes. By the way, you never kissed *me* in your life. You were too ugly a dog when little, and now I suppose I may say too *honest* altogether."

"You would never indulge me in the folly, you know," Dan responded.

"In consideration of the precarious state of your health, I will now for the first time."

"The first time," Dan repeated, as his lips met hers, and kissing her again he added, "that is the last time, in all probability. Mary, — good-by."

My distress had reached its climax, and, as he took my hand, I laid my head on his shoulder, and wept in the keenest sorrow.

"O Mary, — Mary, — don't," said Dan, with a laugh. "Imitate the women of the Revolution. I am only going to California, little sister, and am coming back to die in Dixie." He held me for a moment to his heart, kissed my cheek, gently disengaged his arm, and passed through the door with his brother. The servants had crowded out on the sidewalk. Dan had a kind word for all, especially Reynolds, whose faithful services he held in the highest estimation, as I was well aware. George stopped to look at the horses, and Dan improved the occasion to light a cigar. He looked up at the company on the steps, and added, "good-by, all."

"Take care of the laudanum bottle," called Mrs. Berkeley. With a feeling of utter isolation, I lingered with my four companions on the steps, caught the last look, — the last wave of the hand, — and I saw him no more.

"Well, there is an end of Dan," said Mrs. Berkeley, as she closed the front door with emphasis, when the carriage had rolled away. We spent the next hour in the parlor discussing his fate, which all agreed in regarding an uncertain one.

The lieutenant's return ended the conversation, and his mother asked a few questions relative to his brother's final departure. Either there was very little to tell, or Berkeley was not disposed

to tell it, for he only said that Dan was shipped with all his worldly goods in safety, and there had been quite a crowd of gentlemen at the wharves to see him off.

It was the morning ensuing Dan's departure that Livy imparted to me a secret, having first exacted a solemn promise that I would not repeat it again. Hinda, who could never dispense with a confidante, had been expatiating on her strong hopes of captivating Lieutenant George Berkeley. Livy told her candidly, that she wondered very much herself that the young officer had been so attentive to her (Hinda), considering her confession the morning after Mrs. Preston's party; and she ventured a suspicion that Berkeley was not aware of the characters who had truly figured in the transaction. Hinda adroitly turned the conversation; in the course of a few minutes she said she had a great secret to impart, which Livy promised never to tell, and then confessed that she had never made any confession to the lieutenant whatever, but had exonerated both herself and Olivia, by throwing the blame on Mary's shoulders.

The pain which I felt on this announcement, for the first time opened my eyes to the fact that his opinion was of far greater value to me than anybody's friendship. My word was pledged, —I would not have broken it for any consideration. It was my part to be thankful that my eyes were opened. The cause of Lieutenant Berkeley's distant behavior was fully explained, and a most intense longing now seized upon me that he should, by some means, know the truth. How could I wonder that his demeanor was so unsatisfactory while he believed me to be desperately in love with such a man as Jones? and how could I expect him to regard me with any thing but a contemptuous pity, while under a conviction so derogatory to my character? In vain did I say to myself, that his opinion did not signify; in vain did I assure myself that he had been hasty and unjust. I could not feel so thoroughly persuaded of that. What did he know about Hinda? What reason had he for questioning the direct assertion of a young lady whose veracity he had no earthly cause for doubting? Moreover, the whole affair was probably of so little account in his eyes, occupied as he was with other matters, that he dismissed it from recollection; or, if recalled, it could only be coupled with a wonder that Dan should have been so miserably deceived.

That evening the lieutenant sprained his ankle, and kept his room throughout the following day. The next, which was Fri-

day, he remained all day upon the sofa in his mother's sitting-room on the second floor. Mrs. Berkeley was in a remarkably pleasant humor, and the young ladies, who found no occasion for promenades, with the exception of Gatty, frequented the apartment throughout the whole morning. Hinda was in her element. She read snatches from the newspapers, repeated poetry, and talked sentiment. I judged from Lieutenant Berkeley's silence and paleness, that he was in too much pain to give any thing but a divided attention; as the day wore on, however, his spirits revived. But I was seriously troubled in soul. His opinion of me engrossed my distressing, — my incessant speculation, — and I resolved that, before another day had passed, I would take some measures to change it. I determined to lead to the subject by demanding an explanation of his coldness of manner. I improved the very first opportunity when I found him alone in his mother's apartment The lieutenant expressed his surprise, and stated that he was utterly unconscious of the fact, begging me to tell him in what particular instance he had been guilty of deficiency. But, alas! I could not lay hold on one occasion where the even tenor of his manner had been forsaken for any positive demonstration of his disapproval; and, finding that I should only make matters worse, I gave up the attempt in despair.

I went to my room and sat for an hour with my head resting on the table, endeavoring to analyze the emotions which rendered any man's opinion of so much consequence to me. I supposed any other gentleman of my acquaintance in the case, and could not deny that were it Lionel Hervey, Mr. Davis, or even Gov. or Jack Berkeley, I should care very little about it indeed. I had not cared in this way when suffering formerly under Dan's misapprehension. Falling in love with Lieutenant Berkeley was a contingency to be avoided at all hazards; and, with the laudable intention of escaping the danger, I did not go near my aunt's apartment for the remainder of the day.

On Sunday, Berkeley was so far recovered as to move around the house by the aid of a crutch, and on Monday a slight lameness was the only remaining vestige of the accident. Hinda was assiduous in improving every opportunity for interviews and conversations with him. She was constantly found in the library, or in the dining-room, or in Mrs. Berkeley's sitting-room, in company with the lieutenant, who appeared in nowise dissatisfied with her society. During those days, though it was my effort to avoid him studiously, yet there were moments when we were necessarily thrown together, and each one was fraught with more pain than the last.

On the evening of Shrove Tuesday, which fell in that week, there was a large party at the Bourdlémes to celebrate the last night of a Carnival which had been an unspeakably sad one for me. Mrs. Berkeley was out all the afternoon, and having, with a heavy heart, laid out my dress for the evening, I sat down by the window and cried for an hour. How much longer my melancholy feelings would have held sway I cannot decide, as their indulgence was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Lieutenant Berkeley. I dried my eyes hastily, though the traces of tears it was impossible to conceal, and I was all the more mortified, as this was the third time it had happened in the course of the day. On the two previous occasions Berkeley had not noticed my distress in the slightest degree, and I was in hopes that he would not now; but to find a young lady drowned in affliction for the third time in eight hours, was an appeal to his sympathies not to be resisted. He seated himself just opposite me by the window, and, as soon as I could command my voice, I remarked that he did not look at all well. Berkeley attributed it to a four days' confinement within doors, and acknowledged that he was very anxious to be out. Shortly after, he expressed his concern at the low state of my spirits, and asked if there was nothing he could do to alleviate it. I said it had not lasted very long. Berkeley said he knew that, — it had only lasted all day, nevertheless he thought it an unfortunate thing that such eyes as mine should be taxed in that way, even for a minute. He did not wish to force my confidence, but if I would trust him, it would only be necessary for me to say *how* he might serve me.

I inquired if I had not heard him once quote Talleyrand's maxim: — "Treat every friend to-day as though he were to be your enemy to-morrow," and desired to know how, if he would inculcate such a rule, he could consistently ask me to break it in his favor?

Berkeley replied that that was a rule to which he should take many exceptions, — indeed, no rule of that kind could be laid down, the exceptions to which would not outnumber all the rules in the universe. The precept was one of sound worldly wisdom; at the same time, it was not supposed to include one's brothers. He was only fulfilling the terms of his guardianship in offering me his counsel and assistance.

With so fine an opening, I endeavored to lead the lieutenant to be more explicit. If he would only suggest a love affair, or give one hint on which I might declare that my distress had nothing whatever to do with Ramsay Jones! In vain did I advise

Berkeley to frame a guess. But he declined, — he might guess every imaginable thing in the universe without lighting on the right one. The possible causes of a young lady's affliction were so numerous, that it would be quite sufficient if Miss Brandegee should tell him the source of her present trouble, or else inform him that his aid could not possibly avail.

As I made no reply, Berkeley rose to leave the room. Just as he reached the door, he turned with the very question I had been wishing he would ask, but so unexpectedly as to deprive me of the power of reply, — "Are you in love?"

I flushed to the temples, and my reply was another resistless flood of tears. Berkeley apologized for his rudeness in asking such a question, and he feared it was all the more unpardonable as he had some suspicion that such was the case. I now stammered, — "Why, whom, pray, do you imagine me to be in love with?"

The lieutenant replied, that his imagination had not meddled with that question, and he had a little advice to give me. Girls of eighteen very often fancied themselves in love without foundation. At that age the judgment was so easily biased, that unless the discretion of older persons was consulted, a woman might render herself miserable for life. Fancying these remarks were to be levelled at Jones, I said, with some heat, that Lieutenant Berkeley was very greatly mistaken if he imagined me to be in love, for I was not then, nor ever had been before. Berkeley was very happy to hear that my discontented frame of mind was not caused by any such calamity, though I saw plainly that his smile was strictly incredulous. Further developments were prevented by the entrance of Hinda. I was only surprised that she had not come before.

The family of Judge Ostrander were to accompany us to the party. Lieutenant Berkeley was engaged at home with some officers for the early part of the evening, but had promised to join us, if possible, by eleven o'clock. Miss Eleanor Ostrander and her cousin, Fanny Douglas, with Mr. Davis, were the only ones who appeared. We were quite late, and while Gatty was mending her skirt in the dressing-room, having torn it in her exit from the carriage, I noticed that Fanny Douglas had taken Hinda aside. She was talking earnestly, and Hinda listening with an aspect of undisguised alarm.

"Mary," she said to me as we descended, "it is all out!"

"What is, Hinda?"

"Why, about Jones, — the Andersons have made it a nine

days' talk, and Fan says it was spoken of at the Ostranders last dinner party. Isn't it dreadful? Who would have thought that just an innocent little excitement could have made such a blaze?"

I offered all the consolation in my power, which was quite limited and not absolutely effectual. The spacious and brilliantly-lighted saloons were thronged; the Bourdlémes were famous for crowds, and this night they outdid themselves. The Andersons were among the first persons whom we met on our entrance. Phebe Anderson returned Hinda's salutation coldly, and Miss Anderson's bow was of the most disdainful character.

"Hideous, she looks!" was Hinda's low-toned comment to me. "I positively hate that woman."

A minute after, Mrs. Preston passed and greeted us.

"There's another creature I hate," said Hinda; but the reason she had no time to give, as she was led off to the dance by some one of her numerous admirers.

As I was passing around the room, after my first Lanciers, I met Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, who informed me that she was to leave town on the following Thursday, and, after stopping a day or two at the Hamilton mansion, should return permanently to Georgia.

Whilst I was conversing with Mrs. Berkeley, there passed us, among the circle moving slowly around the room, a lady who, in the transient glimpse which I had caught of her, struck me as being one of the most beautiful creatures I had ever beheld. She caught Mrs. Berkeley's eye, — on both sides there was a hesitating, wavering look, — then Mrs. Berkeley bent her head coldly, — the lady replied to the salutation with a superb curl of the lip, — and I saw that the gentleman, whose arm she had taken, was Jones.

"Who is that beautiful woman to whom you just bowed, Mrs. Berkeley?" I inquired.

"It is Mrs. Brancton," was the reply. I looked around quickly, but the figure was lost in the moving crowd. The mention of her name had awakened a strange pain in my heart. She was nothing like what I had imagined Mrs. Brancton to be. The waving wealth of her jet-black hair falling in curls on her peerless shoulders, — the noble cast of her features set in Jewish type, — would have impressed her on my imagination as an imperious Vashti, rather than a Jezebel. I expressed to Mrs. Berkeley my surprise that she knew her. Mrs. Berkeley replied that she had known her as a girl, and had been very painfully associated with her; and she then changed the subject by

telling me that Mrs. Preston had been talking in a very shameful manner about Hinda. I thought she must be mistaken, — that it was Miss Anderson instead of Mrs. Preston who was talking, but Mrs. Berkeley was positive.

Miss Bourdléme came presently to ask me if I knew at what time Lieutenant Berkeley was coming. "You must know," she added in a low tone, "La belle Brancton is anxious to see him, — and if he is not coming to the party, she will go to a ball; so do say he will be here, I beg."

But I was unable to gratify Miss Bourdléme by any thing further than the assurance that the lieutenant was coming with the carriages, — business had detained him. Miss Bourdléme now went on to tell me that she had heard the strangest thing, — really, if she were Miss Wriothesley's guardian, she should take some notice of the things that were said by Mrs. Preston. What these things were Miss Bourdléme had no time to tell me, but it was not a very difficult matter for me to imagine.

As Hinda and I passed into the supper-room, following Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, my companion in misery informed me that she was in a very great deal of trouble. Fan Douglas's revelations had been more than confirmed. Everybody was talking about her, — she was so rejoiced that Lieutenant Berkeley would not arrive until late in the evening, and that these rumors might escape him.

I endeavored to reassure her by saying that it could probably be easily hushed up. "Indeed, it could not," Hinda responded; "while there were two such relentless foes as Miss Anderson and Mrs. Preston to circulate the story."

Jones, having returned from seeing Mrs. Brancton to her carriage, just as these remarks were concluded, had taken his station near the hall door, from which post he had our party in full view. My attention, at the same moment, was attracted by an observation made close behind me in a gentleman's voice: "Very beautiful girl, — quite *distingué*, — who is she?"

"Name is Wriothesley," answered the other, — ward of General Berkeley's; rather a wild sort of girl, they say; flirts tremendously. Desperately in love with Ram. Jones."

"Ah!" echoed the other, with an indescribable accent. Other words were on his lips, but his companion checked him with a low-toned "Hush!" and at the same instant, "Good-evening, Sidonia," in the voice of Lieutenant Berkeley, sounded on my ear. Mrs. Berkeley greeted her brother-in-law with cordiality, that for the next few minutes engrossed all his attention. The

two gentlemen, who had remarked on Hinda, passed around through the crowd, and I noticed that the lieutenant looked at them narrowly as they went by. That some of their remarks had reached him I could not doubt. They had evidently escaped Hinda's attention. Miss Bourdléme now came to call me a very wicked creature, for having told her that Lieutenant Berkeley was not coming to the party, which had thereby lost one of its brightest ornaments, in the shape of "La belle Brancton;" but as my false information had been given in all innocence, I was not much affected by the censure.

Mr. Jones, I saw, was viewing the quartette, made up of Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, Hinda, myself, and the lieutenant, with no very pleasant expression of countenance. He took no refreshment, not even a glass of wine; spoke to no one; looked at nobody excepting Hinda. This state of affairs continued until the supper-room began to thin out. Hinda had already placed her fan through Berkeley's arm, when Mrs. Preston passed by with a gentleman. She stopped to speak to Hinda.

"My dear creature," she said, "I positively have had no chance to speak to you before. How do you do?" and she added, in a tone scarcely lower, "and how's your cavalier?"

"What cavalier, pray?" demanded Hinda.

"Peter Haskins," replied Mrs. Preston.

"I recollect no such name, madam," said Hinda.

"Well, Petrarch or Petruchio, — Petrarch Haskins."

"I never met any such man, madam," returned Hinda.

"Not the *man*, Miss Wriothesley, the *name*," Mrs. Preston rejoined, with a sneer. "Petrarch Haskins, station at the Bible House."

Hinda shook her head persistently. "Never heard of any such place," she replied; "never knew any such man, — cannot conceive what you mean."

She hurried on with Berkeley, while Mrs. Preston looked after them with an air expressive of astonishment and contempt. The few persons remaining in the supper-room, all of whom had witnessed the scene, had preserved all the apparent unconsciousness of good breeding with the exception of Jones; who, not having lost a syllable of the short dialogue, said, in a low distinct tone as Berkeley passed with his lovely charge: "Most extraordinary young lady!"

The crowd just coming through from the inner supper-room was so great at that moment, as to detain Mrs. Berkeley and myself for some minutes by the door. It was not long before I

discovered that the handsome lieutenant had become the object of universal admiration. Several ladies asked me his name, and those that knew it, accompanied their remarks with many flattering comments. Miss Bourdléme had spoken of him as the "new lion," the "last Apollo," the "star of the season;" with many more epithets, to which all judges seemed to give a ready response. There was, however, one deficiency not calculated to deepen the favorable impression which Berkeley's handsome face and courtly manner had created, — and this was that he did not dance. This lamentable peculiarity was accounted for in every imaginable way by the admiring circle. It was at first reported that the young officer was a Methodist, and forbidden by the law of that denomination to indulge in such an amusement, — but the discovery that he was "a Berkeley" was sufficient to correct this impression. The observations to which this apparent idiosyncrasy gave rise, were quite amusing to me, who was well aware that it was only the consequence of a lately sprained ankle. While I was satisfying Miss Phebe Anderson on this head, Hinda, coming to my side, accosted me with an air of alarm in a low tone:

"Mary, — what shall I do, — the lieutenant and Jones have just left the room together! Come with me to find them."

But an engagement for the quadrille, claimed at that instant by Mr. Preston, prevented me from complying with this request. I saw Hinda leave the room alone. I did not see her again until the dance was over, when I found her, pale and depressed, in a corner of the room, listening with a languid attention to the remarks of a devoted swain, who was vainly endeavoring to charm her ear.

Hinda assured me she was ill, — she sent the gentleman to tell Mrs. Berkeley so, — and then went on to say that she was the most unhappy and forlorn being in the universe. She had found the lieutenant and Jones in the upper hall, and as she came up, Berkeley had concluded their conversation by remarking: "Very well, sir, whatever else there is to be said can be settled at leisure." She had been too afraid to speak to Berkeley, and she was too angry to speak to Jones. She then begged me to get Mrs. Berkeley and the whole party away as quickly as I could. She knew there was going to be a duel.

The gentleman returned with a message from Mrs. Berkeley to the effect that Miss Wriothesley might retire to the dressing-room, until the rest of the party were ready to go. But as Hinda did not feel at all the necessity of withdrawing from

the parlors, she remained to discuss her sorrows with me. She would never forgive Jones as long as she lived! I asked what he had done.

"Why, didn't you hear him say I was an extraordinary young lady?" said Hinda. "Heavens! the look that the lieutenant gave him spoke volumes. I knew there would be a trouble, — I knew it — I knew it. Oh, if I could have foreseen it when this unfortunate little excitement first originated!"

I was not a little concerned myself. I thought at first of speaking to Mrs. Berkeley, but I knew that such a measure would be of no avail. I had just resolved, in accordance with Hinda's earnest suggestion, on speaking to Jones, to assure him of my firm conviction that she would never think of him thereafter, should he quarrel with Lieutenant Berkeley; and was just leaving the room for the purpose, when I saw Mr. Jones taking leave of Mrs. Bourdléme in evident haste, which movement was followed by his immediate disappearance. Following out the injunctions which Hinda had laid upon me, in case I should fail in holding my conference with her recreant lover, I next attempted to address the lieutenant on the awful subject. Informing him that I desired to speak with him, I had just taken his offered arm, when Miss Bourdléme addressed him:

"Lieutenant Berkeley," she said, "I cannot have you acting in this stupid way, — you know very well that you are the cynosure of all eyes, and yet you keep standing around, or walking about, with all the old dowagers and uninteresting wallflowers visible. I cannot endure to hear again, 'A splendid fellow, but why does he not dance?' Never mind if it does hurt your ankle, try one polka for the sake of your character. They are surmising all kinds of things about you, — calling you a monk, and a Methodist minister, and every thing that's horrid."

Berkeley, of course, immediately solicited the favor of Miss Bourdléme's hand. As I followed his figure with my eyes till it disappeared on the curve of the whirling circle, my aunt bade me tell Hinda that we were all going now. She, herself, was half dead, and Livy had had a very stupid time, and Hinda was not well, and it was nearly one o'clock, — all these reasons combined had determined her on going at once.

In the dressing-room, Hinda eagerly asked me if I had spoken to Lieutenant Berkeley, and was in dismay when I said I had had no opportunity. She declared that she must manage it in some way for him to go in the carriage with me, and besought me to find out if there was to be a duel. In vain did I repre-

sent that there was no possible way in which I could discover, and that I knew Mrs. Berkeley would never allow me to go in one carriage with the Lieutenant, while the three other girls occupied another with her.

The result of Hinda's manœuvres, when we reached the sidewalk, was, that the lieutenant put his mother with Livy and me into one carriage, and Gatty and Hinda in the other. As he shut the door, a tall figure in a long cloak, which I had noticed leaning against the short stone pillar at the foot of the steps, approached, and uttered a few words in a voice which I recognized to be that of Jones. He drew back with the lieutenant near the steps, and they remained there talking many minutes. The carriage in which Hinda was, had gone up to the end of the block. As we did not follow, it turned and came back to the door, and I heard Hinda asking, in tones of extreme agitation, what was the matter.

"Come, George," called Mrs. Berkeley, "don't keep us all waiting."

The lieutenant bade Jones good-night, entered our carriage, and we rode off. For some time the conversation was chiefly maintained between Mrs. Berkeley and Livy. I was too anxious to talk, and from the expression legible on George Berkeley's handsome face whenever the light from the street lamps fell across it, I could not wonder at his silence. At last he asked his mother if she could explain the reason of Mrs. Preston's enmity to Miss Wriothesley.

Mrs. Berkeley said she could explain it very easily. During the previous fall, while Mary and Livy were still in Virginia, she had brought Hinda to New York with her. Mrs. Preston had just come in town, — met Miss Wriothesley several times at church, — and a violent intimacy had sprung up between them; so much so that Mrs. Preston had invited Hinda to pay her a visit of three or four weeks. Hinda had accepted the invitation, and every thing appeared to be progressing very well, until at the close of a fortnight Mrs. Preston had surprised Mrs. Berkeley by a note requesting her to take Hinda home, as her conduct in flirting with Mr. Preston had been so outrageous as to pass the utmost bounds of Mrs. Preston's endurance.

Lieutenant Berkeley burst into a laugh, and observed that he reckoned something of that sort had been the matter. Mrs. Berkeley said she should like to know what had been the matter to-night, Jones had looked like a thundercloud all the evening.

"By the way, George," continued Mrs. Berkeley, "somebody told me that you were going to kick Jones down stairs."

The lieutenant replied that he was not in kicking condition just then, nevertheless he had assured Mr. Jones that if he did not stop talking about the young ladies of this family, he should be reduced to the necessity of lodging a bullet in his jaw.

Mrs. Berkeley trusted that such a catastrophe might be avoided; and she inquired what Jones had been saying. Berkeley did not know; he had not heard him make more than one remark.

"Are you going to fight a duel?" I asked, precipitately.

The lieutenant, who I thought was annoyed at this query, remarked that Miss Brandegee asked a question as an archer would shoot an arrow. Mrs. Berkeley's ideas were excited. All these interviews on staircases and sidewalks had not been lost on her; she was sure that her son had called Jones to an account for all those wretches, the Andersons and Mrs. Preston, had been saying about that poor little Hinda. If he had only heard Jones make one remark she knew he never had waited for the second, and Mary having suggested a duel, she demanded to know the truth.

This Mr. Berkeley had no hesitation in telling. The truth was that he and Jones had indulged in some severe repartee on the subject of Miss Wriothesley, — it had been settled that they were to meet, and Jones had thereupon left the ball-room; but just now as our party was leaving the house Jones had returned, and the five minutes occupied in an aside to the lieutenant were consumed in offering an ample apology for all that he had said about Miss Wriothesley, inadvertently or otherwise. Mrs. Berkeley was not satisfied with this explanation until the lieutenant had several times reiterated the assurance that he and Mr. Jones were on a perfectly amicable understanding.

My aunt now proceeded to deprecate the conduct of Hinda's enemies in the course which they were pursuing. It was very true Hinda had erred; but Mrs. Berkeley thought it chiefly owing to thoughtlessness. There was no justice in a person's being hunted to death for one error. Lieutenant Berkeley made no reply, and Mrs. Berkeley's commiseration for Hinda, and her indignation against those who lost sight entirely of the innocence of her motives, had attained such a pitch that Livy could restrain herself no longer. It did not argue innocence, she said, for Hinda to throw all the blame on Mary the morning after Mrs. Preston's party, when Mr. Jones's shameful remarks in the car had made some explanation a necessity. Here had Lieutenant

Berkeley for the last month been imagining Mary entirely in fault, and his cold and distant behavior had cost the said Mary a great many painful hours and tears.

At this juncture I did my best to stop the course of Livy's revelations, but it was impossible to restrain her, now that she was determined to speak, — "painful hours and tears," she repeated. "Hinda was an unkind and selfish being. They had promised to tell no one, it was true, that Miss Wriothesley had been guilty of such gross misrepresentation to Lieutenant Berkeley, but she (Livy) felt entirely absolved from any promise made to so base and perfidious a female." Livy ended by saying that she considered it a highly unjust thing for Hinda to purchase Lieutenant Berkeley's good opinion by such infamous detraction from Mary, who was the soul of honor and generosity, and the most self-sacrificing of beings.

I felt my cheeks grow warm at this enthusiastic and unmerited praise, and would have given much could I have caught a glimpse of Berkeley's face as Olivia's judgment was pronounced.

Berkeley now remarked, in a very calm tone, that Miss Schermerhorn was quite mistaken in supposing that his opinion of Miss Wriothesley had been at all at the expense of his esteem for Miss Brandegee. Livy replied that she was sure his esteem for Mary had not been *heightened* by Hinda's assertions. Berkeley said that she misunderstood him. Livy answered with heat that his behavior to Mary was not susceptible of being misunderstood, and in her opinion he owed her a very profound apology.

Berkeley was silent, and my aunt, with a sigh of weariness, exclaimed, — "Come, George, if you are going to apologize to Mary, make haste with it, and then we will let the matter drop."

"I owe Miss Brandegee no apology," replied the lieutenant.

"You certainly do," insisted Mrs. Berkeley, "if it is true that you have never given her an opportunity to acquaint you with the truth. How can you say that you owe her no apology?"

"Because," replied the lieutenant, "I have never been deceived."

This observation was echoed by its three auditors; by Mrs. Berkeley with dissatisfaction, — by Livy with incredulity, — by me with astonishment. We all requested him to explain how he had fathomed Hinda's artifice. Berkeley replied that he could not explain how the wind blew, and was quite as unable to account for the fact that he was not a fool. Further questions were prevented by the stopping of the carriage before the door of the Berkeley mansion.

It was late. Mrs. Berkeley, Livy, and Gatty went directly to bed. I waited in the hall to speak to Berkeley, who was detained by Hinda in the parlor. She was expressing her great anxiety lest there should be a fight, — lest dear Mr. Berkeley should be shot, — lest he should shoot Jones, and be arrested and hanged. These surmises were pressed with an agitation which threatened an immediate attack of hysterics. When Hinda's equanimity was so far restored by Berkeley's assurances as to enable her to ascend the staircase, which was half an hour after the ascent of her predecessors, the lieutenant, having turned out the light in the parlors, found me awaiting him solitarily in the hall. I said that I desired to speak with him.

The lieutenant replied, that he would be very happy to listen, — but he must remark, that another word on the subject of the duel would finish him off. I replied, that I had nothing to say about the duel, — that I only wished to say, in relation to Miss Schermerhorn's singular assertions with regard to my tears, and so on, — it was not to be attributed to any behavior on his part, which, under all circumstances, had been quite unexceptionable. It could be explained by other reasons, — I had several private griefs; then again, Dan's going was quite a source of sorrow to me, — a very great trial, in fact; several petty annoyances had served to disturb my spirits, and to make me appear as though suffering under the pressure of a constant mental burden.

Throughout this declaration, which I delivered with any amount of stammering, Lieutenant Berkeley stood with his clear, azure eyes fastened on my face. To my concluding inquiry if he understood me, he replied that he reckoned he did, — what I wished to say was simply, that the low spirits on my part, to which Miss Schermerhorn had alluded, were not to be attributed to any regret at the supposed loss of his good opinion, for which I did not care a straw, — but were to be referred to Dan's trip to California, *in primo*, the death of my canary bird, *in secundo*, and the loss of a fan, *in tertio*. Was not that it?

I said, "yes," but, as I uttered the falsehood, I felt my lips blanch, and my arms fell nerveless. I stood leaning on the balustrade in an attitude which I feared must be extremely awkward, — looked first at the torn ribands of my ball-dress on the floor, then again at the lieutenant, whose speaking eyes had not been withdrawn from my face, and, with the short-sightedness of guilt, I added, "Of course, you believe me."

"I am sorry to say, Miss Brandegee," replied Berkeley, "that I do *not*."

"May I ask, why?" I inquired.

"Certainly," answered Berkeley. "In the first place, my behavior towards you *has* been marked with tenfold greater reserve than has characterized it towards either of the other young ladies. In the second place, you *have* remarked that circumstance, as you spoke of it once to me. In the third place, you are not a young lady whose spirits will be materially affected by trifles; and, in the fourth place, I take it as conclusive proof of the fact, that you have remained for half an hour here on purpose to deny it."

"You think, then," I remarked, "that I would not look upon the loss of your esteem as a trifle."

"I am quite convinced, Miss Brandegee," he answered, "that there is not a man in the world whose esteem you would be less willing to lose."

Calling to my aid all the self-possession of which I was mistress, I measured him from head to foot with my eyes, and replied, "That *sounds* a little conceited, — in a boy of nineteen it might be readily forgiven."

"Understand me," proceeded Berkeley, as I turned to ascend the stairs, — "I mean exactly what I say, — and not a jot more. I would not have you infer that I have the slightest idea you have fallen in love with me."

"Really!" said I. "Are you quite sure that you have no such idea? Allow me to tell you, Lieutenant Berkeley, that in all your ideas you are quite mistaken. Your esteem is of little value to me, and your late remarks only serve to impress me with the sense of your unparalleled assurance. Whatever little desire I may have lately felt to deserve your esteem has entirely vanished."

"Do you say that in cold blood, Miss Brandegee?"

"Hereafter," I said, "I shall not attempt to preserve the appearance of harmony which your own words have banished. We are hostile."

Berkeley shrugged his shoulders. "Sworn enemies," he said, "from this day forward. Nevertheless, I assure you that it is simply in voluntary obedience to your commands I allow it to rest there. I know my own power. If I chose it, you would throw yourself into my arms in less than fifteen minutes."

"Such language as this only merits my pity," I answered. "Good-night."

"I was speaking figuratively," said the lieutenant.

"You need not attempt it again," I replied, with asperity. "I detest you."

"Which means, 'I adore you,'" Berkeley rejoined. "My dear

Miss Brandegee, I am your most obedient, humble servant. Good-night."

I hastened on to my own apartment, feeling ready to burst into tears. Hinda, who was just unlacing her bodice, immediately began to lecture me for my improper conduct in staying so long downstairs to talk to Lieutenant Berkeley, when everybody else had gone to bed. I replied, that I had only talked with him a very few minutes, and the result was, that I considered him a detestable person.

"Oh, he is fiendish," Hinda alleged. "But, Mary, — so truly as I am a Christian woman, — I would sacrifice much for the power of recalling the whole of this unfortunate evening."

"And I," was my thought, "would sacrifice any thing for the power of recalling the last five minutes."

It would be a difficult matter to decide which was the more unhappy that night, Hinda or I.

In the following week, while Livy and Agatha were preparing for a visit of several days at the Ostranders, Mrs. Berkeley received intelligence that Dan Hamilton was dead. The news had but just arrived. Mr. Hamilton had died rather suddenly, after an illness of three days' duration. He had left all his property to Dan, with the exception of a few small bequests.

Mrs. Berkeley seemed ill at ease. Now then, she said, Dan would be back again, and rich, — the owner of a handsome estate in Virginia, and a large moneyed property aside from the land. He was certainly a lucky dog. The misfortune was, that he had so short a time to live, — perhaps when he died, he would leave his fortune to the Roman Catholics, — Dan Hamilton would have been far more sensible had he left the estate to one of *her* sons.

Dan's first letter, postmarked Sacramento City, written to Mrs. Berkeley before the news of his uncle's death had reached him, contained the assurance that his voyage had been effected in safety, — that he felt very much better than when he left New York, and that it was his present expectation to return in the following July. His subsequent letters, which were not very frequent, made scarcely any allusion to the state of his fortunes, and he mentioned quite often a young Roman Catholic priest, by name Father Lucien.

"I wonder if he will come back," said Hinda to me. "It would not be a bad speculation to marry him."

To the prospect of Dan's return I looked forward with delight, and I regarded the coming July as the *Ultima Thule* of my sor-

rows. For some time these continued passive. I had not exchanged a word with Lieutenant Berkeley since the night of Shrove Tuesday, except a good-evening, or good-morning, or an occasional monosyllable. Apparently, all recollection of that short dialogue had vanished from his mind, — his demeanor was as calm, indifferent, and invariably polite as before.

One night, near the close of Lent, there was a diversion. A discussion arose regarding the superiority of what Lieutenant Berkeley chose to call the "modern forms" of certain words over their primitives. I could not avoid asking whether he considered the word nigger (which had frequently interlarded his conversation during the evening), to be one instance of this usual superiority. Unquestionably! Berkeley said. Nigger, compared with negro, was by far the more pleasing, refined, and graphic expression of the two. The one was Ethiopia condensed, — the other suggested the waving orange grove, — the Mississippi canebrake, and "the little hut among the bushes." Negro was the type of blazing suns, burning sands, and coal-black skins, — make it nigger and one's imagination was regaled by a nimble darkey, with banjo, sweetheart, monkey shines, and all. I insisted that negro was still the proper word, — it was never corrupted in public speeches, or in writing. Berkeley cited authorities directly, — the catalogue embracing the names of several distinguished statesmen, adding that they were fully sensible of the fact that simplicity invests language with its highest grace.

To this I replied, that there was no propriety in using the corruptions of words for the words themselves, and that vulgarity was very remote from simplicity. The word under discussion I considered essentially vulgar. Berkeley assured me that, so far from being vulgar, nigger was elevated. More than that, it was classical. It was the Latin *niger* with an extra *g*, and since *niger* was translated "black," it was an additional argument in favor of the legitimacy of the word.

His flippancy served only to make me more earnest. I became excited, denied his right to hold an opinion or to entertain a fancy, and pronounced the changing a current phrase an outrage on literature. The discussion lasted for two hours. When it came to an end I had not yielded the ground a particle, and Berkeley was as much attached to "nigger" as ever. I felt that he hated me, and the longer I considered it, the better-founded did I regard this conclusion.

The lieutenant went early the next morning to Albany. On

the day following my aunt received a summons to the house of a relative on Long Island who was dangerously ill.

Gatty and Livy were still at the Ostranders, thus Hinda and I were the only members of the family at home. Mrs. Berkeley went away in a hurry, and her parting instructions to me, delivered with the keys of the closets, embodied chiefly the express injunction to "keep Hinda out of mischief."

PART IV.

Mrs. Berkeley's carriage had scarcely rolled away, before Hinda led me directly into the library, with an air of mystery that raised my expectations to the highest pitch.

"I have a great secret to tell you, Mary," she said, "I am going to run away with Ramsay Jones."

I stood aghast. "Hinda, you are crazy!"

"No, my dear, I should be crazy to let the chance slide now that they are all away. An elopement! Miss Wriothesley and Mr. Jones! — think what an excitement there will be for all parties!"

"How can you think of it," said I, "after all his outrageous conduct in betraying you to Mrs. Preston?"

"That has all been explained. Jones wrote a letter of twelve pages. All that he ever did say about me was the remark that Berkeley overheard him make at the Bourdlémes; and he has apologized for that to an incredible extent. Mrs. Preston heard the story from the Andersons, — she never dreamed that Petrarch is Jones. I must write to say we can go the day after to-morrow."

"You will be wretched for life!" said I.

"Well, then, it must all lie at Mrs. Berkeley's door. Did not she present me to the worst advantage before Mr. Hamilton? didn't she bring me home from the Astor when Mr. Hunter was there? and she says he is coming here to make a visit; but I cannot discover that he will ever come."

"Wait till July, — you may marry Dan," I said, in keen distress at the project which she harbored, and anxious to advance some diverting motive.

"Oh, nonsense! I can never marry Dan, he knows me too well. You might as well advise me to marry Dan Hamilton."

"Or the lieutenant?" I suggested, faintly.

"What! George Berkeley? not at all, my dear. He dallies

along, and keeps up a tantalizing kind of flirtation, but he means nothing by it at all. I must give up the lieutenant in despair. Beside, Mary, Jones is desperate, — he threatens to shoot himself, or some such thing as that, if I don't marry him, and, really, I believe he will."

"Then do be married in a proper way," said I. "Ask the consent of the General, and have a respectable wedding in church."

"My dear Mary, the General would never give his consent, or if he did, Mrs. Berkeley wouldn't, and we should be obliged to run away at the last. Beside, Jones says that Mrs. Brancton has found out something about it, and she is very jealous. If she should hear that I was going to be married, my life would not be safe."

"Well, Hinda," I said, when, after half an hour's discussion, I found that my arguments produced not the slightest impression, "I give you fair warning, if you do not abandon all idea of this rash step, I shall inform Mrs. Berkeley, and means shall be taken to prevent it."

Hinda turned pale. "Why, Mary, this is strangely at variance with your former honorable conduct toward me. There was a time when rather than betray any secret of mine you would bear all the blame yourself."

"Yes, Hinda, and I would again. In cases of honor I prefer to err on the safe side; but now that the happiness of your whole life is at stake, and you are about to sacrifice it by a step that you can never retrieve, it is my solemn duty to prevent you by any means in my power."

"Solemn fiddlestick!" answered Hinda. "You will not deprive me of the finest excitement I ever had thrown in my way. If Jones is insufferably cruel to me, which I know he will not be, seeing that he loves me to distraction, I can get a divorce, or some such thing as that. As you have such a fiendish intention to frustrate my scheme, I must hurry matters, that is all. Instead of the day after to-morrow, Jones and I must go to-night."

Hinda was evidently so thoroughly determined, that no admonition of mine would be of any avail. Her revelation had greatly discomposed me. I watched her, therefore, in distress of soul, while she penned a *billet-doux* to Jones, to be despatched at once. When it was written, Hinda rang, and desired Jarvis, the footman who answered the bell, to take that note directly to Mr. Jones's lodgings, and should he not be in, to inquire where he might be found, and if Jarvis could not find him there, he

was to proceed until he *did* find him. Jarvis looked very much as a man instructed to find a needle in a haystack; and as soon as he had departed, Hinda further discussed the feasibility of the project. Not much preparation on Jones's part would be necessary for a two days' absence from the city. She should send for her clothes after her marriage of course, — but as it was quite possible that Mrs. Berkeley might make her some trouble about them, she intended packing a few articles with which she felt least willing to part into a trunk, to be taken with her. Then, having rung for Reynolds, she bade him see that dinner was served at five o'clock, — to make that well understood in the kitchen first, after which he was to go to the livery-stable and order a carriage for six o'clock. "Be specific, Reynolds," she added, "say at six o'clock."

Armed with these instructions, Reynolds vanished. Hinda walked about the room a few minutes after, discussing all the chances and possibilities in the way of her final success, speculating on the probable reception which Mrs. Berkeley and the family would give the news, and then went up to our apartment to prepare for her departure. I was in serious trouble; nor could I avoid attaching some singularity to the fact that this thoughtless conduct on the part of a thoroughly selfish being, could awaken so much sorrow in my heart. But I had known Hinda too long, and had been too intimately associated with her, to feel entire indifference to her fate. How it was possible that, knowing Jones to be so dissipated, unsettled, and unreliable a person, she could be willing to confide to him her happiness irrevocably, I could not divine. She was evidently completely infatuated, either with the idea of a fancied attachment to Jones, or with the prospect of an "excitement," or with the discomposure which her elopement would cause the whole Berkeley family. I did not doubt that, should I save her by any means in my power, she would certainly feel obliged to me hereafter — in an hour of calmness. But the means in my power were limited. I might send for Gatty and Livy. Hinda certainly could not go in the face of their dissuasion. On reflection, I thought it better to send for them at all events. I therefore called in Reynolds, who was on the point of departing for the livery-stable, and bade him, so soon as he had ordered the carriage for Hinda, to go up to Judge Ostrander's, with a note from me to Miss Berkeley. In this note I acquainted Gatty with Hinda's rash design, advising her to tell Judge Ostrander if she thought it necessary or expedient, — and begging her to

come home, at all events, without delay. Anxiously did I await the return of the messenger. For the next two hours I sat by the window in my own apartment, while Hinda wrote a long letter to Mrs. Berkeley, thanking her for all her past kindness, — expressing a due sense of her manifold admonitions, not to say castigations, — announcing in terms both select and polite Mr. Jones's intention of relieving that lady of her grateful charge, — and begging Mrs. Berkeley to console the lieutenant by every means in her power. To this lengthy letter Miss Wriothesley added a postscript, to the effect that she should expect her clothes that week to be forwarded to Mrs. Ramsay Jones, at No. ——, Bleecker street, and also all the money that had been left her by her late father, now indisputably hers on the event of her marriage, which was the same thing as attaining a majority.

"Not that I expect to get it," Hinda remarked, as she folded the letter, "but I am determined to ask for it at all events. I am not really of opinion that I shall see any thing of mine that I leave in the house under a month."

I thought this very likely, provided she succeeded in leaving the house. It was twelve o'clock before Reynolds returned; and perceiving that Hinda had proceeded to make arrangements for the packing of her clothes, I went below to learn the fate of my message to Gatty. Reynolds informed me that he had been obliged to leave the note. Miss Berkeley had gone to Flushing to join her mother, — Judge Ostrander was in Washington, and Miss Schermerhorn was out. I was once more in despair. What was to be done? My next thought, of course, had been to send for Aunt Judith; but I did not know to what part of Flushing she had gone. If I were to send a special messenger, he might find the same difficulty in the search that Jarvis appeared to experience in the execution of his errand to Mr. Jones. Beside, even if she were apprised without any delay, how could she return in time to prevent Hinda's mad escapade? I thought of Lieutenant Berkeley, — he was in Albany, and to arrive at home by six o'clock, he should be on his way now. I might as well have thought of Dan in California.

But I still had a hope. There might be delays. I did not think that Hinda could get away by six o'clock, even granting that Jones was punctual. I would, at least, do all in my power to summon one whose presence would operate as an effectual check, after which no blame could possibly attach to me. I wrote a message of a very few words, directed it to Lieutenant G. L Berkeley, at the Delavan House in Albany, and sent

Reynolds with it to the telegraph office. With a heart which this last move had served to agitate all the more, I returned upstairs to the apartment, where Hinda was busily engaged in folding silks and laces, and gathering together her letters, trinkets, and small articles of attire. She thought it singular that Jarvis had not yet returned. He had been gone now nearly two hours. This wonder was lost in the impossibility of folding a set of quilled flounces without mashing them. Hinda requested permission to leave them in my closet, and desired me to smuggle them to her after her marriage. Both these requests I ostensibly granted, feeling a little ashamed of my duplicity; and, having assisted in the doubling of a camel's-hair shawl which Hinda alleged she was quite attached to, it having been a former present from Dan, I seated myself on the bed, and watched her movements, — so fearfully engrossed with my own reflections as scarcely to be able to reply to her remarks. Granting that the telegram were forwarded to Berkeley immediately, it would be one o'clock before he could possibly receive it, — and if he should be out on its arrival, there was no certainty, of course, when he would be in. At even an express-rate, the lieutenant could not reach New York under six or seven hours; and whether an express, or any other train left Albany during the afternoon, either on the Hudson or Harlem Railroad, I was altogether ignorant. It was entirely an affair of hazard.

The day was on the wane by the time Hinda's preparations were complete, and having closed the lid of the trunk, drawn the curtains, and lit the gas, she began to make her evening toilette.

"Well, Molly," she said, as her hair tumbled over her shoulders opposite the oval mirror, "we've seen some good old times in this house, haven't we? and in Virginia too. How often I shall think of them!"

"You will repent this rash step bitterly, Hinda!"

"Well, then, my dear, may there be a long time to repent in, — that is all I can say. I shall write to you as soon as I am married, and I shall want you to come and see me before the end of the week, to tell me whether Mrs. Berkeley stormed a great deal, and, above all, what the lieutenant said about my elopement. And do go and see if Jarvis has returned. It is highly strange that he does not come."

The result of this investigation was, that Jarvis had not yet made his appearance. It was five o'clock, and on the announcement of dinner, Hinda and I went down. Jarvis came just as we were seated at table. He informed Hinda that on his first

visit to Mr. Jones's lodgings he had not found that gentleman in; and as he (Jones) had left word to the effect that he would be at the Seven Horns Hotel, Jersey City, until twelve o'clock, Jarvis hastened there forthwith. But the object of his search had just gone, and Jarvis went next to three consecutive places where it was supposed that Mr. Jones might possibly be. But in none of these three places could he be found. At last Jarvis came back to the original lodgings, discovered that Mr. Jones was in, and left Miss Wriothesley's note in charge of a servant.

"Suppose," I remarked, as Jarvis retired, "that Jones should not come?"

Hinda replied that "that was not to be supposed." But when dinner was over, and no sign of the young gentleman was visible, I saw that she began to think that his eventual non-appearance might be a supposable case. It wanted a quarter of six before her growing indignation found vent in audible terms. At six o'clock the carriage had come, and Jones hadn't. Hinda paced the parlor in the greatest agitation. What was to be done about the elopement if there was no bridegroom? Seven o'clock came, and still no Jones. Hinda, having gone out five times on the balcony, and having sent Reynolds five times more out on the sidewalk to see if any one was coming, was now pacing the parlor with the gait of an enraged hyena; whilst I, seated on the sofa, indulged in keen regret that I had been so precipitate as to send a summons to Lieutenant Berkeley, which might call him home, perhaps from business of importance, for nothing.

"What *can* be the matter?" said Hinda, stopping short at last. "Can it be that Jones is sick? I think I will send Jarvis down to Bleecker street to see."

Against this measure I strongly advised her. I thought that, whatever had detained Mr. Jones, it was his duty to apprise her of it. It was not at all probable that he had been taken sick so suddenly. Not influenced by these arguments, Hinda despatched Jarvis on a third visit to Bleecker street, bidding him go with all possible speed. In less than three-quarters of an hour Jarvis returned. The servant, with whom he had left the note, regretted that he had been mistaken in the assurance that Mr. Jones was in on the occasion of Jarvis's second visit. On going up to deliver it, he discovered that the young gentleman had lately gone out. Supposing the letter to be one of importance, he had gone around with it to the house where Mr. Jones was to dine. It had taken him but a short time, as it was a little ways

up Madison Avenue, and he had just returned as Jarvis came to investigate.

"Madison Avenue!" exclaimed Hinda, as Jarvis retired after this statement. "Mrs. Brancton's! Jones is a contemptible villain. He has had my note at least half an hour. That carriage shall not wait another second. I'll give it a dollar, and send it away. If Jones should come now, I shall decline his acquaintance. Mary, just lend me a dollar; I must dismiss that man at the door."

"Not I, Hinda."

"What! not lend me a dollar! I'll repay you this time, I promise."

"Quite possible; but I do not care to risk your sending the carriage away. You may not intend to. I shall have nothing of the kind on my conscience when Aunt Judith returns."

"Confound Aunt Judith, and you too. You are a false friend." Hinda rang, — bade Reynolds take a dollar out of the money Mrs. Berkeley had left him for some household expenses, and dismiss that carriage. As it rolled away, Hinda's vexation against Jones increased. To say nothing of his staying at Mrs. Brancton's after the receipt of her note, how could it be possible that he had gone to see her at all, in the face of her (Hinda's) often-expressed opposition to his continuing such a pernicious acquaintance. Here it was eight o'clock, — would be nine very shortly. Perhaps the note had been intercepted, — perhaps Jones had shown it to Mrs. Brancton, — perhaps he had not opened it! Her surmises having reached their limit, Hinda concluded by expressing her irrevocable intention of never speaking to Mr. Jones, or looking at him again.

In the midst of this declaration, delivered with much circumlocution, but with none the less emphasis, Jones arrived. He came swaggering into the drawing-room, rushed up to Hinda, who stood with an air of offended dignity at the further end of the room, fell on his knees, and broke forth into the most extravagant expressions of gratitude for her inestimable, adorable goodness in consenting to make him the happiest of men. Hinda listened for some time in silence, then bidding him rise, she drew out her watch, and displaying it to him, said, with an air of calm severity: "Half-past eight, Mr. Jones!" Mr. Jones hoped Miss Hinda would not blame him for arriving half an hour before the appointed time. He had been so anxious to hear the truth from her own seraphic lips, that really it was past his endurance to wait till nine o'clock.

"That subterfuge will not avail, Mr. Jones," said Hinda, with asperity. "You know very well that there was no nine o'clock in the question. Six was the appointed time. I wrote it so explicitly, and you have been quite too late to appreciate your good fortune in being the 'happiest of men.' It is nearly four hours since you received my note. I expected you at five; and, sir, imagine, if you can, the sensations of a young lady, who, having told a man that she will marry him, finds him three hours and a half behind the time!"

Jones plead and protested in vain. There had been a delay with the note. He had been dressing when it came, — he had been obliged to buy a pair of kid gloves and a necktie, — his boots had been blacked, which operation had not been completed by the domestic until nearly eight o'clock. All these excuses only served to aggravate his fair mistress's displeasure. To delay three hours in obeying her summons was bad enough, without attempting to avert her censure by such silly excuses. Jones, at last, confessed that he had not been at home when the note was left, that it had been sent to the house of a friend with whom he was dining, and that it had not been given him until the company had risen from table. His horror was great on discovering that he had missed such an appointment, and he had come away directly, not stopping to bid adieu to his hostess.

Hinda desired to know whose servants were so delinquent. Jones evaded the question, but when Hinda pressed it, said that he had dined at the Preston's. "You spoke of your hostess," continued Hinda. "How was Mrs. Preston looking?" Jones, with some irritation, declared that in the prospect of an immediate union with her, he could not think of Mrs. Preston's looks, — he believed she had looked like a witch, as usual.

Hinda's severity increased. She inquired how lately Mrs. Preston had moved to Madison Avenue. Jones, perceiving that Hinda was supplied with the facts, made a virtue of a tardy confession. He had been at Mrs. Brancton's, it was true, — he was very sorry for that, — supposed Hinda would forgive him, although he found it impossible to forgive himself, — but there were extenuating circumstances; — he had felt it an absolute necessity to go. Hinda's note had been brought to him at the table. Mrs. Brancton had recognized the hand on the direction, and had rallied him on the subject to such an extent, that he sat through the two intolerable hours that the dinner lasted, without essaying to open the note. As soon as he was master of its contents, he had come directly to General Berkeley's without wait-

ing to go home. It was a very painful thought that he had been at Mrs. Brancton's, though he was certainly magnanimous enough to confess it freely to Hinda, in the expectation of her probable jealousy.

"It is a painful thought for *me*, Mr. Jones," returned Hinda, looking at the flushed countenance of her lover, "that I have appointed an elopement with a man who, for three hours after the time, has occupied himself in getting tipsy. You have proved the fact sufficiently by speaking of my jealousy. I was never jealous of such a creature as Mrs. Brancton in my life."

Jones declared that he was as sober as a judge. He would leave it to Miss Brandegee. I could not deny that he seemed to be as sensible as usual. Now, then, he was anxious to be off at once. He entreated that a carriage might be sent for, and that they might depart immediately. But Hinda was not graciously inclined. It would be ten o'clock before the carriage could be at the door, — by the time they had reached the village, where she had intended to be married, it would be half-past eleven. They would not find the clergyman up at so late an hour, nor the sexton; and the church could not be opened before midnight, which was an unheard-of hour for a wedding.

This Mr. Jones did not dispute, but he offered to remedy the difficulty by lessening the distance to half an hour's drive, and to promote the facilities by seeking out a Justice of the Peace who would perform the ceremony in a satisfactory manner. Hinda's indignation kindled again at the suggestion. In no such heathenish way as that would *she* be married. The announcement which should astonish the world in the next day's paper, must not be coupled with the name of a town clerk whom nobody knew. Jones insisted that the highest official in the city would be only too happy to marry them. The mayor, like everybody else, knew him perfectly, — considered him a very clever-hearted, generous fellow, — he happened to know that the mayor could be found that night at the Astor House, where he was on business, — that he need only send up his card, to ensure the immediate readiness of His Honor, who would cement their union in the firmest manner. All he intended to propose was a drive down town.

"I'm afraid you'd be looking round for the 'nearest tree,'" replied Hinda. "I see myself riding about New York in search of the mayor at ten o'clock at night! He would send you to the station-house, and me to the lunatic asylum."

The discussion ran high, and was conducted with some heat.

Jones declared himself a shamefully treated, a very ill-used man. After the note she had sent him that evening to change her mind and break her word in this manner evinced entire heartlessness, and a base disregard for the feelings of others. His hand, his heart, his fortune, his principles, his talents, his name, — all these were at Hinda's disposal. If she saw fit to refuse him he could say nothing. He wished that he had never been born. If she desired him to prove his love, she had only to name the sacrifice. Should she suggest to him to go out and kill a man in the street, he would do it; but, by Jupiter, he would not be trifled with in this manner any longer. When he left the house now, he would have left it for the last time. He would soon put himself beyond reach of her wiles. With some sweeping denunciations of the female sex, and a few fearful hints, intended to convey to his auditors the idea that the East River would contain "one more unfortunate" by sunrise, Mr. Jones quitted the room in an agitated manner.

Hinda followed him into the hall, where the interesting couple spent some time in an excited discourse, of which only infrequent snatches reached my ear. Jones's state of despairing resentment lasted long; he didn't care where he went, — didn't care what became of him, — didn't care if he was dead, — it could not last much longer, and he hoped that when he *was* dead Hinda would be sorry. Hinda pronounced her lover an "absurd creature," a "most ridiculous man," and a "crazy fool," to no purpose. Jones was quite unmoved in the sense of his own wrongs and of her perfidy. At last, Hinda resorted to her most powerful argument. Amid tears and sobs she declared Jones to be a most unkind and unreasonable being, without pity, without humanity, and without remorse. She was going to disappoint all her lovers, offend all her relations, and lose her best friend for his sake, and he repaid her by the most despicable accusations and unjust reproaches, in consequence of which her heart was breaking.

Jones devoted himself to the task of consolation, but, as the residue of the discourse was conducted in a lower tone, I could judge only of the nature of his arguments by their effects. Hinda reëntered the parlor where I was still seated, and asked what hour of the morning I should think most proper to appoint for a marriage.

I declined giving any opinion. Hinda rang, and I heard her direct Reynolds to go again to the livery-stable to order a carriage for five the next day.

Hinda and her lover having taken possession of the dining-

room, I decided to remain in the parlor until the gentleman had taken his departure; and, lying down upon the sofa, I pondered the chances of the final frustration of her design. According to the last arrangement, Lieutenant Berkeley's return at any hour during the night would be quite efficacious. But his coming was doubtful. My telegram had been dubiously worded, containing merely the announcement: "H. W. goes to-night," and the injunction: "Come immediately." Should he not receive it until in the evening, he might decide that his arrival between midnight and dawn would be superfluous. It was, therefore, quite likely that he would not come.

But of this I could not feel so fully persuaded. I listened to the roll of the carriages over the paving, and the sound of the pedestrians' footsteps on the sidewalk, with a constant fluttering of the heart, as I fancied that some one of them was stopping before the door. Hope at last grew dim; till, as the clock struck ten, I had given up finally all idea of Berkeley's arrival, and the monotonous rattle of the vehicles, joined to the voices in the distant apartment, had soon the natural effect on my senses. As Reynolds came in to close the shutters, I awoke, and, at the same moment, I found Hinda by my side.

"Come, Mary, give me the key to the linen closet. I must have a room prepared for Jones."

"For Jones, Hinda? What in the world do you mean?"

"I mean that Jones is to stay all night, — don't be stupid. It is eleven o'clock now, — I'm very sleepy, and, if the elopement is to take place at five o'clock to-morrow, I must go to bed in decent time to-night."

Beginning to comprehend the nature of the emergency, I managed to attain a sitting posture, acquiesced in the idea that it was late, and said I thought it time for the whole household to be in bed.

"Well, where is the key, Mary?"

"What key?"

"Don't be so owlish, — the key to the linen closet. I have asked you already half a dozen times. Where is it?"

"Tied up with the other keys."

"Well, — let me have it."

"Not I, Hinda," I responded, resolutely. "Aunt Judith left all the keys in my charge, with the special injunction to keep you out of mischief. I cannot suffer any key to leave my hands."

"Well, — unlock the closet with it, at least."

This I positively refused to do. I knew Mrs. Berkeley would

be highly indignant if I were to forward this disgraceful affair in the least. I had set my face steadfastly against it. Moreover, I thought that to invite Jones to remain all night, in the absence of every member of the family except two young ladies, was, on Hinda's part, a highly improper proceeding. I could not sanction it, nor did I intend to give her the key of the linen closet, or of any other place. There was a warm discussion. Conscious of being in the right, moreover, fully sure that the servants would obey the orders of no one but myself, I did not yield one iota of the ground I had taken. Hinda argued the question for some time in vain. At last, I heard her asking one of the maid-servants in the hall if it was not possible for one apartment to be fitted up for the reception of a guest, minus the assistance of the all-important key.

The girl replied that she had arranged Mr. George's room that morning, against his return. The difficulty was thus happily obviated. Hinda bade Jarvis show Mr. Jones directly to Lieutenant Berkeley's apartment; and, after an indefinite number of minutes consumed in bidding Miss Wriothesley an affectionate good-night, that gentleman was ushered up the staircase.

Having closed the shutters in the parlor, Reynolds proceeded to bolt and lock the front doors; and, having received my permission to go to bed, he retired through the hall to the back stairs. Hinda had followed me into the dining-room to relieve her mind by some reproaches levelled against the inhumanity of my conduct, when she was so shortly to be disowned by the whole family, and cast off forever. The course of these animadversions was suddenly interrupted, as Jarvis entered the dining-room, and, investigating the sideboard, withdrew a decanter of wine.

"Jarvis, where are you going with that?" demanded Miss Wriothesley. Jarvis explained, in a humble tone, that he was taking it up to Mr. Jones, who had ordered a bottle of Madeira.

Hinda vetoed the order. She bade Jarvis deposit the decanter in the sideboard, and tell Mr. Jones that she was positively sure he did not want it. In a few minutes, Jarvis again made his appearance. Mr. Jones had sent a message to Miss Wriothesley, begging that she would make no objection to his having the wine. He was to be up at four on the following day, — should be completely worn out, — and felt quite ill already, having been up all the night before with a friend who lay at the point of death.

I doubted if he had been up all night for so reputable a reason, but, without seeming to harbor any like suspicion, Hinda permitted the ascent of the decanter to Lieutenant Berkeley's

room. Fifteen minutes, during which time I still lingered below, a prey to unconquerable anxiety of mind, had passed in a series of reproaches on the part of Hinda. She had just risen, and, with a yawn of decided weariness, expressed her intention of going to bed, when the sound of a key turning in the front door, arrested our attention.

"Did you hear a rat?" exclaimed Hinda, looking apprehensively at the wainscot. I shook my head, the nature of my sensations not enabling me to speak, and immediately the question of the rat was decided by a sharp, imperative ring at the front door.

"Who under the sun can that be, at this time of night?" exclaimed Hinda. She rose, and walked through the drawing-rooms, while, struggling hard to banish the expression of guilty exultation that my features wore, I retained my seat, motionless. A few minutes passed, — then the bell rang a second time, and, soon after, a third. Presently I heard Reynolds shuffling down the back staircase, and, from the glimpse which I caught of his habiliments, I judged that he had been anticipating the summons. He turned up the gas in the hall, — then I heard him draw the bolts of the door.

"Heavens, Mary!" exclaimed Hinda, as she returned to the dining-room, the very picture of consternation. "It's Lieutenant Berkeley. What fiend can have inspired him to come home to-night?"

"Are you sure it is he?" I asked, demurely.

"Yes, — I saw him. I would rather have seen the devil! How in the world am I to get Jones out of the house?"

"Out of the house!" I repeated. "What! will you give up the elopement?"

"Hang the elopement! What *shall* I do about Jones. In Berkeley's room too! Dear, dear, beloved Mary, do run quick and speak to that demon in the hall; ask him to come in here, or he will be right upstairs!"

I was spared the pain of declining, by the appearance of Lieutenant Berkeley, who entered from the hall. Recovering her self-possession almost immediately, Hinda turned toward him, held out her hand, and welcomed him with the greatest appearance of cordiality. "My dear Mr. Berkeley," she exclaimed, "how extremely fortunate that you have come! Never in my life have I been so glad to see you!"

Berkeley replied that it was indeed very fortunate she was glad to see him. It was, of course, quite unnecessary for him to

expatiate on his overpowering joy at meeting her once more. "But really, Miss Hinda," he added, "the assurance was entirely unexpected, — I fancied from your looks on my entrance, that you wished me at Halifax."

Hinda at once proceeded to disclaim. The lieutenant said, "of course it had been a mistaken idea altogether," and, having besought her to resume her seat, he called in Reynolds to replenish the fire, and prepare something in the shape of supper, — he was quite famished, having eaten nothing since breakfast. Hinda, evidently utterly at a loss, and influenced solely by the dread of detection, took her place opposite me, while the lieutenant seated himself before the fire. Berkeley's first question addressed to me, was concerning his mother. I explained that she had gone to Flushing, though I did not venture to add that Gatty was there also, lest Hinda should wonder whence I had derived my information. "Then you two are all alone here?" remarked Berkeley. I did not reply, and Hinda immediately answered, "Alone, — oh, yes, — quite alone."

From the manner with which Lieutenant Berkeley received this assertion, it was impossible to divine whether he gave it any credit or not. Reynolds now came in to ask what Mr. George would like for supper. There were fried oysters, and there was tea. One of the maids was below preparing them, and if Mr. George would like any thing else ——

"My dear Miss Hinda, where are you going?" interrupted Berkeley, as the young lady was leaving the room. Hinda replied that she was going to see if there was nothing better for his supper. Berkeley assured her it was quite unnecessary. No man could find fault with rations consisting of fried oysters and tea, at twelve o'clock at night. Hinda then said she thought she had better go and call up another of the maid-servants to aid in the preparation. To this Berkeley responded that he was sure one woman would find herself equal to the exertion of bringing the viands upstairs, — if not, Reynolds could assist her. He begged that Hinda would not trouble herself about it, but sit down and talk to him instead. Hinda cast a look of despair at me, but returned without a remonstrance.

"You may take my valise up to my room, Reynolds," said the lieutenant, as Reynolds finished the preparation for supper. Reynolds responded, feebly: "Yes, sir," and left the room, while Hinda seated herself at the table, to pour the tea for Berkeley, looking the very personification of woe. In vain she nodded and made signs to me; — I was utterly insensible to all, until

Berkeley's repast was finished, and Reynolds again reëntered the room. The lieutenant opened the cigar-box on the mantel, found it empty, and remarked that there were cigars in his own room, — he would smoke upstairs.

At this Hinda rose in desperation. Berkeley asked her again whither she was going, and Hinda replied, sharply: "Why, confound your impertinence, I am only going upstairs, — do let me alone." And, looking back as she reached the door, she added: "I will be back again soon."

For the few minutes that she was gone, I was busied at the sideboard with certain directions to Reynolds about the silver, which prevented Berkeley from addressing me directly on the subject of the elopement. The only words exchanged were, on my part, a question as to when he had received my telegram, and by what train he had come, and the reply, on his. Hinda's return cut short the opportunity for further discourse. Supposing that Jones had had his warning, and was making his escape from the house, I was surprised to behold the air of utter consternation in her whole deportment still undiminished. Beckoning me into the hall, she entreated me to defer a separation for the night as long as possible. She had gone to Jones's door, but for some time had been utterly unable to attract his attention. His light was out, and his only reply to all her admonitions was, that he would stand the hazard of the die. In vain she begged him to issue from the room. Jones had professed his entire inability to find the door; and when, after any amount of stumbling about, the door was found, he could not imagine what he had done with the key. He was probably in no condition to leave the house, to say nothing of running away with a young lady. Hinda again besought me to keep Berkeley downstairs as long as I was able; and we reëntered the dining-room.

Hinda resumed her seat by the fire, and, supporting her forehead on her hand, she remained in an attitude of deep dejection, scarcely answering when addressed. Time wore on — it grew late — and, at half past twelve, my sense of humanity forbidding me to regard Hinda's injunction any longer, having pushed my forbearance to the furthest commendable limit, I ventured to say I thought it was quite time to go to bed.

In this the lieutenant acquiesced; and, as he rose from his seat, Hinda, who had looked daggers at me on the suggestion, detained him, saying that she thought it would be necessary for Miss Brandegee to surrender the key of the linen closet. Another room must be prepared for Lieutenant Berkeley, — his own, unfortunately, was occupied.

"Occupied with what?" asked Berkeley, looking at Hinda with an astonishment, the natural result of such an announcement.

Hinda unfolded, though stammering vehemently on every word, that a gentleman had been there to spend the evening, and he had staid so late that she had been obliged to invite him, — that was, Mary had been obliged to invite him, — that was, he had invited himself to remain all night.

"Rather extraordinary," Berkeley thought, "that a gentleman should have invited himself to remain there all night, in the absence of everybody but Miss Brandegee and herself!" Hinda proceeded to say, in much confusion, that she had objected to the measure, — that indeed she had suggested to the gentleman that he should *not* stay, but he had insisted on it, and that she and Mary had both concluded that the easiest way of getting rid of him was to let him remain.

Berkeley reckoned *that* rather an unprecedented way of getting rid of a person, and then inquired why Reynolds and Jarvis could not have enforced Miss Wriothesley's request to the obtrusive visitor. Hinda said she had very much disliked a fuss of that kind, — calling in servants and all that, to expel a gentleman, and she had been forced to waive objections and admonitions, which had been entirely disregarded by the said individual.

"Perhaps an admonition on the part of my present supply of sole-leather may not be disregarded," said Berkeley, turning toward the door. Hinda exclaimed that she was sure it would not have the slightest effect! "Very well," Berkeley answered, "one argument he was sure would be quite effectual," and he put his hand under the breast of his coat, with a significance that caused Hinda to turn deadly pale. She sprang forward, and placed herself between Berkeley and the door, just as he reached it.

"Good Heavens, Lieutenant Berkeley," she cried, "this is acting the part of a Southern bully! To kick a guest downstairs, or shoot him when he is unarmed, would be actually an ungentlemanly thing!"

"I must beg leave to inquire," said Berkeley, facetiously, "what kind of a thing you call it for a man to insist on staying all night in a house, against the express request of the lady in charge of it. I will not shoot him, that is, not to-night, but the other method ——"

"You must not disturb him at all!" cried Hinda, and she proceeded, in some embarrassment, to clear the gentleman's character from the imputation to which she had just subjected it. The

truth was, it was only Ram. Jones. He had been very polite and agreeable, and, as Mrs. Berkeley and the lieutenant were both away, she and Mary had asked him to stay all night, for the sake of protection.

My indignant "Hinda!" led the young lady to modify this statement. "Very well,—you disagreeable creature;—*I* asked him," she said; and then added that since he had the right of an invited guest, she trusted that Mr. Berkeley would not molest him either with pistols or sole-leather.

I now observed that the lieutenant would be obliged to wait until I could superintend the arrangement of another room. Berkeley seated himself, remarking that he was prepared now for any thing. Hinda followed me from the room,—where was Jarvis? she wanted Jarvis immediately, and on my inquiry what it was for, she represented that she must get him out to watch for the arrival of the carriage, before Berkeley bolted the front door. If the driver should ring, it would be the death of every thing. She hurried Jarvis below, telling him to watch vigilantly, and promising him remuneration on the following day.

"Why did you not send him to the stable to tell them not to send the carriage?" I asked. Hinda said nobody would be up at the stable. Greatly did she regret not having gone the night before. Procrastination was the thief of time, but it was all Jones's fault,—he should have come at the hour she appointed.

"For Heaven's sake, Mary," she cried, in despair at my directions to the chambermaid; "don't give Lieutenant Berkeley *that* room, I beg. He will surely hear the carriage when it comes. Put him on the upper floor."

But, as regarded the room, I was relentless. Lieutenant Berkeley was to have the one which I had assigned him, and no other. If the carriage should come, and be sent away, I did not see why the lieutenant's hearing it would be any harm.

Hinda was now obliged to confess that she and Jones were going in the morning, and she besought me once more to change the lieutenant's room, but all her protestations and entreaties were in vain. As soon as the arrangements were complete, I sent the maid down to inform Lieutenant Berkeley that his room was ready.

"Now, then," sighed Hinda, "it is to be hoped, at least, that he will come up and go to bed." But the consummation thus desired was not arrived at, as yet. As I stood winding my watch, at the head of the staircase, I heard the lieutenant's voice sounding like the deep tones of a bell from the lower hall.

"Whose trunk is this, — Reynolds? Why was it put here in the dark for people to stumble over?"

"Heavens! I must attend to that!" murmured Hinda, and she called from the staircase, "Lieutenant Berkeley, — that trunk belongs to one of the servant-girls, whom Miss Brandegee discharged this morning. Hush, Mary!" she said in an aside to me, as a remonstrance rose to my lips. "You can tell him, to-morrow, that it was a white lie."

A few minutes after, I heard the lieutenant ask Reynolds if he knew which of the maids Miss Brandegee had discharged. Reynolds, of course, did not know, but there were letters on the trunk in brass nails. These letters were H. W. Hinda came again to the rescue.

"It was Gertrude, Mr. Berkeley," she said. "I made her a present of a trunk."

"Ah!" ejaculated Berkeley. "Satisfactory, — quite!"

"I wonder how much longer he intends to prowl around the house," said Hinda, "and what he will be finding next. There he goes to the front door. Heaven send that he bolts it, and goes to bed!"

But before the front door was bolted, I heard it turn on the hinges, and the lieutenant's exclamation: "Jarvis, what the deuce are you sitting out here on the stones for?"

Jarvis explained that he was looking at the stars.

"Upon my soul," said Berkeley, "I believe this household is moon-struck. Never mind the stars to-night, — come in, and go to bed."

Jarvis came in obediently, and Berkeley fastened the door with his own hands.

"What an owl that fellow was not to keep on the sidewalk," said Hinda. "Now, then, what am I to do about the carriage. Thank Fortune, that cursed lieutenant is coming up the stairs at last!"

We withdrew to our own apartment, where Hinda listened anxiously to every motion of the lieutenant. "That man has grown intolerable," she said, "he is exactly like a detective officer. I know he will hear that bell when the driver rings it! I wish I could dose him with opium, or some such thing as that. Mary, can't you tell him that Gertrude expects a carriage at five?"

"No, Hinda."

"Disagreeable to the last, I see; Mary, *dear* Mary, — the last favor I may have it in my power to ask you for an age!"

But against even this assault I was impregnable. Hinda be-

sought for some time in vain, and we went to bed in mutual bad-humor. As it was quite late, I fell readily asleep.

But my slumbers did not continue long undisturbed. I was aroused to consciousness by a stifling sensation which I strove in vain to overcome. I turned my face to the pillow, fanned the atmosphere, but the effort to gain a breath of fresh air was ineffectual. At the same moment I heard Hinda throwing open the window, and, so soon as I could speak, I asked what was the matter.

"There is a fire somewhere,—get up and dress yourself." This injunction I obeyed in haste.

The whole household was alarmed, and there was an excited crowd gathered in the hall. The fire was discovered to proceed from the room of which Mr. Jones was the tenant, and the chief difficulty lay in arousing that gentleman to the true sense of his precarious situation. Lieutenant Berkeley informed him through the door that his room was on fire. Jones stated that he knew it; and alleged that it was impossible for him to find the door, and that, should the impossibility be surmounted, it would be beyond his power to open it without the key.

"And what are you going to do, Jones! burn up?" asked Berkeley.

Jones replied that he supposed so, unless the lieutenant could assist him. By the time that the chisel, for which Jarvis had gone, had arrived, the hall was so densely filled with smoke as to make such assistance an almost impracticable matter. At length by the united efforts of the lieutenant and Reynolds, the lock was broken. Jones having been rescued when on the point of suffocation, the servants proceeded to extinguish the flames, which had originated in a closet, on a shelf of which Jones had been careless enough to lay a lighted cigar. The fire having been effectually quenched, Lieutenant Berkeley proceeded to disperse the household, replying to a suggestion on my part as to the probability of sparks lingering in the wainscot, by saying that he would be up and around all night to provide against the possibility.

"Yes, I dare say you will be 'up and around,'" muttered Hinda, looking up from a short conference with Jones at the head of the staircase. Jones now remarked to Berkeley that he thought he would go back to Bleecker street. But this measure Berkeley at once opposed, insisting that there was no necessity whatever for Jones leaving until after breakfast. Prevailed on by these representations, Jones consented to stay,—and when

once more within our apartment, Hinda informed me that her mind was fully made up to go at five o'clock. Her only difficulty was how to evade the lieutenant, but that once surmounted, she thought there could be no obstruction in the way of the final success of her plan. Jones was to await her at the foot of the staircase, and at five o'clock, as soon as the carriage should appear, they were to steal out of the house.

Until five o'clock Hinda remained stationed at the window, watching for the arrival of the carriage, — while I, lying upon the edge of the bed, caught only intervals of rest. I was aroused at last by the touch of Hinda's lips on my forehead, and her "good-by, dear Mary," whispered in my ear. I started up. Hinda stood in her cloak and bonnet by my side, — and bidding me make no noise lest the lieutenant should hear, she issued from the room. I followed her softly. As I looked over the balustrade I caught a glimpse of Jones's tall form, and the motion of his high hat, and heard the bolts of the front door clicking gently as they were withdrawn. Two thoughts had flashed across my brain, — the one that I ought to call Lieutenant Berkeley; the other, that the matter was now entirely in his hands, and I had no more to do with it, when the voice of the young officer sounded from the library, —

"Where are you going, Jones? back to Bleecker street?"

There was a dead silence for one minute, — then the bolts were shot back as though by a desperate hand, and Hinda with her lover vanished through the door. Berkeley followed them leisurely, and leaning negligently against the door-post, remarked: "Ah! I see, — it's to stand the hazard of the die!"

By this time, I had reached the foot of the staircase. Jones was just following Hinda into the carriage. "Heavens! Lieutenant Berkeley," I exclaimed, "do you intend to let them go?"

Berkeley made no reply, but retained his station motionless. Mr. Jones now closed the carriage door, and bade the coachman go to the corner, when he was to stop and receive further instructions.

"Driver," said the lieutenant, taking a pistol from his breast, "if those horses move a step, I'll blow your brains out."

As this was a contingency not embraced in the driver's calculation, the horses remained stationary. Mr. Jones asked why the deuce he did not go on. The driver, in much agitation, replied that he did not see how the deuce he could.

"As for *you*, Mr. Jones," continued Berkeley, "I can make no further objection to your going back to Bleecker street. In

fact, sir, if you do not immediately leave that carriage, and take yourself up toward Broadway, I shall blow *your* brains out."

"Not before the ladies, sir," remonstrated Jones.

"To avoid annoying the ladies," said Berkeley, "you will at once follow my directions. Have the kindness, sir, to lose no time."

Jones, who looked as foolish as a man might reasonably be expected to under the circumstances, left the carriage at once, and only stopping to lift his hat to Hinda, he hastened away at a rapid rate. Berkeley, now going down to the carriage-door, informed Miss Wriothesley, in his blandest manner, that he very greatly regretted depriving her of a morning ride; but that, in his opinion, it was rather too early. Hinda protested that she was her own mistress, and the best judge. Berkeley responded that she was not her own mistress, and was no judge at all. Hinda replied indignantly that she was not afraid either of him or his pistols, — she knew Jones had gone for the police, and she should wait till his return, — Lieutenant Berkeley should not rule the universe, — he was acting the part of a cowardly miscreant. Berkeley invited her to leave the carriage. Hinda obstinately refused, —the coachman was not paid, — Jones owed him a dollar.

The lieutenant took several coins from his pocket, which he handed to the driver, then remarking simply: "Pardon me, Miss Wriothesley, necessity is the mother of invention;" he took Hinda first by one arm, then around the waist, and lifting her out on the sidewalk, carried her forcibly up the steps and within the house.

Hinda rushed up the staircase to her apartment. On joining her, I found her glowing with indignation against Berkeley; an indignation which found vent chiefly in tears and invectives. She determined to retain her apartment all through the day. In spite of my remonstrances, she obstinately refused to go down to breakfast, consequently I was alone with Berkeley at the table. He said very little to me, according to his usual custom, and after asking me one or two questions relative to Hinda, turned to the newspaper.

On my return upstairs I was obliged to go through a course of cross-questioning from Hinda, as to what the lieutenant had said about her. She was apparently far from well, professed to be suffering from a severe nervous headache, and the violence of her wrath against Berkeley continued unabated. She declared that she hated all the Berkeleys, whom she pronounced a

bad-principled, and, she trusted, an ill-fated family. As for that "ruthless lieutenant," he was worst of all. He was perfectly intolerable, — he had no arguments apart from horsewhips and pistols, — he had a regular Southern swagger, — Dan was an angel to him. I now said that there was no swagger about him; whereupon a discussion arose in which Hinda accused me of indiscreet partiality. "I am sure, Mary," she said, "nothing can excuse his abominable conduct this morning. He put his arm around my waist without leave or license, and carried me into the house! Oh, I never will forgive him! never! never! I hate him, — he is absolutely detestable. I could have been married now, if it were not for his interference!

This state of feeling, on the part of the fair damsel, continued until ten o'clock, when Lieutenant Berkeley sent a message by Reynolds to the effect that he would like to see Miss Wriothesley in the library.

Hinda replied that she could not see Mr. Berkeley, — she was engaged. Reynolds descended with the message, but before Hinda had many minutes in which to wonder at Berkeley's audacity in supposing she would see him, the messenger again appeared with the assurance from "Mr. George" that he would only detain her a very few minutes, and begged she would come down immediately. Hinda returned that she was positively engaged, and bade Reynolds not come up again.

Shortly after Berkeley sent up Jarvis with a note. Hinda perused it with evident complacency. "Upon my word, it is quite a rigmarole," she said, "he only asks five minutes, — very sorry to have offended me, — Miss Hinda's angelic temper. Ah! yes. Well, Mary, what do you say? Shall I go down?"

"Do as you like," was my advice. Hinda acted on it. Going to the door, she bade Jarvis say she would be down directly, and in a few minutes she descended.

The conference lasted for the next two hours. When Hinda rejoined me at its close, I saw that it had been quite satisfactory. She was radiant with smiles. The lieutenant was adorable. It was the most fortunate thing in the world that he had prevented her elopement with Jones, because he was in love with her himself! "Did he tell you so?" I exclaimed, with a bound of the heart. No; he had not absolutely *told* her so, but it was more than implied in his manner. It would have been very much out of place in him to tell her so, immediately after her attempted marriage with Jones! Of course he could only expect her to refuse him. Hinda now proceeded to acquaint me with

the grounds for her conclusion. For the first hour, the lieutenant had conversed very gravely and sensibly, in demonstrating to her the folly of which she would be guilty in marrying a man like Jones, who, being very ill qualified to take care of himself, was utterly unqualified to assume the responsibility of a husband. He had earnestly advised an entire dissolution of her connection with Jones; and Hinda had seen the justice of his representations so clearly, that she consented to give the lieutenant, that evening, the letters which Jones had written to her, to be taken to Jones by him; and Berkeley was to recover those which she had indited to Petrarch.

I could not see any thing in all this to justify Hinda's impression that Berkeley was in love with her. She made no reply, and I proceeded to comment on her singular short-sightedness in imagining that a man like Lieutenant Berkeley would fall in love with any girl with whose improprieties of conduct he was so well acquainted, and whom he had prevented from marrying such a worthless being as Ramsay Jones. Hinda declared she had thought of all that herself, but she did not believe that Berkeley was a man to analyze a woman's character in that understanding way. He was one to look and admire; but what had chiefly authorized the idea was a little circumstance which she had forborne to mention hitherto, out of pure consideration for me. At the close of the interview, when Hinda had spent half an hour in thanking the lieutenant for all his kindness, he assured her that he certainly accepted her gratitude, as there was not another young lady in the city whose running away he would have interfered with. Hinda suggested Miss Brandegee, and after a minute's pause Berkeley replied with emphasis,—"*No;* if Miss Brandegee had attempted to run away with Jones, or any other man, I should not have taken a step to prevent her."

I did not know whether to believe this statement or not, and, in spite of the uncertainty, it gave me the keenest sensation of pain. Hinda remarked that I was turning pale. I exclaimed: "Nonsense," and left the room to avoid her scrutiny.

But Hinda's decision regarding Jones involved new troubles. Up to the time of Dan's departure to California, he had taken charge of her letters, but, subsequently, the box containing them had been resigned to the lieutenant's keeping, though he was, of course, unaware of the nature of its contents; and, the night previous, in the conflagration, the letters had perished. Hinda was, therefore, obliged to tell Berkeley that the ceremony of exchanging the letters must be necessarily foregone.

I could not decide, however, that Hinda's representation to me had been false. Berkeley had scarcely exchanged a syllable with me on the subject, — had not even commended me for my course in summoning him home. Of course, the condition of his apartment made it necessary for Mrs. Berkeley, on her return from Flushing, to be informed of the whole; yet the lieutenant observed a very strange reticence in speaking of the matter, even to her. This conduct puzzled me, nor could I resist feeling chagrined.

One morning, in the course of a conversation with me, Hinda remarked that she had never ceased to wonder what had brought Lieutenant Berkeley home so unexpectedly on the night of her intended elopement.

"Would you really like to know?" I could not resist inquiring.

Hinda eagerly replied in the affirmative, and I proceeded forthwith to acquaint her with my share in the transaction. Hinda listened with the most flattering attention, and I fancied that, in spite of her self-congratulation on her fortunate escape, she did not feel so very deeply obliged to me as she professed herself to be.

But there were so many causes for my increasing unhappiness that I could not regret receiving an invitation to make a short visit at the Ostranders, immediately on the return of Livy and Gatty. It was in April, and I had the prospect of unalloyed enjoyment during my stay, as my visits in that family were never otherwise than pleasant.

One morning, when it was near the time appointed for my return, as we were all sitting in the dining-room, a little after breakfast, Judge Ostrander, who had been glancing over the morning's paper, looked around with a suddenness that brought every eye upon him with attention; and, in a faltering voice, he read aloud the following paragraph:

"In Los Angelos, California, suddenly, on the 19th inst., DAN HAMILTON BERKELEY, in the thirty-first year of his age."

I sat like one in a dream, and heard, too bewildered to connect the words, all the excited comments of the family. Mrs. Chauncey, — Mrs. Ostrander, — all the ladies wept. The Judge laid down the paper, and rubbed his eye-glasses. The young gentlemen were all shocked and sorry. I could neither stir nor speak. Dan Berkeley dead! It came at the last, with all the force of a sudden shock. I took up the paper, — there it was, in black and white, and, underneath, the business-like request: "Paris and

London papers please copy." It was true. He had said he was coming back to die in Dixie, but he was dead and buried now, and I never could see him again, — never could hear his voice pronounce my name, nor call me "little sister," any more. Then my thoughts turned to that family thus apprised of the loss it had sustained. His poor father, — his sisters, — his brothers! I felt that I must fly back to Twenty-third street, and again was thankful not to be there. In the midst of the confusion, a servant announced the arrival of Mr. George Berkeley.

I dreaded his entrance, but when he came in was surprised as well as relieved on beholding that his demeanor, though serious, was yet calm, and there was no outward sign of internal emotion. He came up first to salute Mrs. Ostrander, who was weeping bitterly on the sofa at the other end of the apartment, and she threw her arms around the neck of her nephew with her usual impetuosity in distress, while she uttered Dan's name in broken accents. It was not, however, Berkeley's intention to make any demonstration that might lead to a scene, therefore, while his aunt's paroxysm of grief endured, he kneeled quietly by her side, while she sobbed on his shoulder, and when at last released, he rose undisturbed in countenance and demeanor. His were the only dry eyes in the room, and I could not help wondering how a man who had sustained so great a loss could witness, so unmoved, the grief of others, always so contagious, if, in his own soul, he were not insensible to the affliction.

He took Judge Ostrander aside, and they conversed for some time in tones inaudible to the rest of the company. As their dialogue ended, I was surprised to find Berkeley coming up to me.

"Mother wants you to come home," he said.

"When?" I asked, in some uncertainty.

"Now, with me. The carriage is waiting."

I made ready as quickly as possible. The ride, though some distance, seemed very short. Berkeley scarce exchanged a word with me all the way, till, as we turned out of Fifth Avenue, I inquired how his mother was.

"Very well, nothing is the matter with her," he rejoined, and having aided me out of the carriage, he ordered the coachman to wait, and, unlocking the door, ushered me immediately into the house. Gatty stood in the parlor door with a manner tolerably composed, though her countenance showed the signs of recent tears, but she only said that her mother wanted to see me upstairs in her room. I ran up in haste. Mrs. Berkeley was seated in her apartment with her younger daughters.

"So that is you," said my aunt, as I entered. "Have you just come? George has been gone long enough to bring you three times over. I knew he would get talking up there. There, he's going. Run, Bess, shout to him over the staircase to wait. Shout, — he won't hear you. Tell him to come up directly."

"Can there be any doubt as to the truth of this dreadful news, Aunt Judith?" said I.

"Oh, no, the poor mad scamp is really dead. The telegram came for George last night. Is that he coming up the staircase? He walks like a snail."

The lieutenant entered as she spoke, and, unlocking a desk close at hand, his mother took out some bills and papers.

"George," said she, "I want you to go down with Mary, and pay for all she buys. You'll have to get the cheque cashed at the bank, and here are some small bills. I never get off my mourning, but I have to put it right on. It is convenient for Judith, as she has just gone in black for Hunter's sister."

"What shall I buy, Aunt Judith?" said I.

"Why, black dresses, child, — black shawls, — black veils. Heavens! must I tell you what to buy?"

I felt chilled by her heartlessness, but was relieved from the necessity of further remarks by Berkeley, who declared that he could not travel down to the bank then, — he knew she had bills, and nothing else whatever would he take. As Mrs. Berkeley was overhauling the desk in search of bills, she observed, carelessly, to her son: "I suppose they are all drowned in floods of grief up at the Ostranders?"

"Naturally. They are a demonstrative set," he answered. "That five is counterfeit."

"Discount or counterfeit? — three cents discount."

"Counterfeit, I tell you, — not worth a straw."

"They'll make more than that on the purchase," said Mrs. Berkeley, — "take it along."

"No, I thank you," said Berkeley, throwing it back on the table. "Miss Brandegee, I am ready to attend you."

"Take care about the bonnets, Mary," said Bessie, "please see that mine is trimmed with bows, — they are prettier than fans. Fans are so stiff and horrid."

"Have the bonnets sent, fans or no fans," Mrs. Berkeley called after me, — "we'll take what we like, — fans or bows."

I was glad to get out of the house, and was once more *tête à tête* with the lieutenant, on a rapid ride down town. I was just beginning to realize the announcement which Mrs. Berkeley had

taken so composedly, and my feelings could no longer be repressed. I have been told, and, from my own experience, should judge, that a man's chief horror is a weeping, hysterical female, but such was the horror which it fell to George Berkeley's lot to encounter. In vain did I strive to restrain myself, — my nerves were too completely unstrung; and, in the midst of my excited demonstration, the carriage stopped at the door of the mourning store to which Mrs. Berkeley had directed me.

"I believe we have arrived, Miss Brandegee," said my companion, in a tone of grave politeness, as he opened the door of the carriage.

I could not reply, — could not follow my impulse to descend, and at every attempt at self-government my tears flowed afresh. Berkeley stood for a few seconds patiently on the sidewalk; then, having given the order to the coachman, he reëntered, and we rode off.

"A pretty subject you are for an extensive purchase this morning," he said. "We must have you home without loss of time."

"Oh, no!" I exclaimed, in horror. "Aunt Judith would never forget it! Tell him to go back, I beg."

"Do not distress yourself, we are only going round the square. The people in the shop will take you for a widow come on your own account. I only wish I could think that my departure from this chequered scene would cost you half as much concern."

My agitation received its most effectual check by these heartless words, and I fulfilled my commission with a manner toward him replete with a coldness, of which he took no notice. I went back the next day to Judge Ostrander's, where I was to conclude my visit. It was a timely relief, for the Berkeley atmosphere was becoming unendurable. Near the close of my stay, Livy came up to see me, and hasten my return. She said that a letter had arrived from the Roman Catholic priest, Father Lucien, containing some particulars of Dan Berkeley's death; and, moreover, that Dan had made George his heir to all the great Hamilton property, which his uncle had bequeathed him. Livy said that George had taken the news of his good fortune very coolly, and Mrs. Berkeley pronounced it the most sensible thing that Dan ever had done. I asked Livy if she had read Father Lucien's letter, and she said yes; that it was quite an interesting one; that the priest had said that he became interested in Mr. Berkeley from seeing him at the chapel, and their acquaintance had progressed very rapidly. Dan had been attacked several times with hemorrhage subsequent to his arrival, and from each attack he

had recovered more slowly. There was a great supper given by him at the hotel where he was staying, during which there had arisen considerable discussion, in which Dan bore the principal share. After the departure of the guests, Berkeley was crossing the hall to go up to his own apartment, when he was attacked again with the hemorrhage, and sat down at the foot of the stairs. The physician was sent for at once, and Dan was taken to a room on the ground floor, until he was able to be carried to his own. He assured Father Lucien that he should soon be better, and insisted that there was no necessity for his remaining. Father Lucien, on reaching home, found a message from a sick member of his congregation whom he went to see at once, after which he came back to the hotel. The landlord was up, and said that Mr. Berkeley, he thought, was doing very well, and was asleep. It was about three in the morning, and Father Lucien walked into the back room, where a light was still burning on the table, and Dan was lying with his face turned to the wall. When he came up to the bedside, he found that he was dead.

Mrs. Ostrander, who, as well as the others of the family, had listened with attention to Livy's relation, now observed with a sigh, that it was a very sad thing to think of Dan's dying in that way, without a friend at hand, and cut off, as it were, from the world in which he had made so brilliant a figure. Livy said that Mrs. Berkeley thought the worst of it all was his dying in the Romish communion, though it was no more than she had expected, for Father Lucien had stated, though without arrogating to himself any of the merits of the conversion, that Dan had been admitted to the Roman Catholic Church very shortly before his death.

As my interest in returning was thus renewed, I accompanied Livy back to Twenty-third street that very afternoon. The lieutenant was in the library, engaged with Dan Hamilton's old attorney. As I stood leaning from the landing-place at the head of the stairs, I heard them coming through the hall together, and Mrs. Berkeley issued at the same minute from the parlor. She exchanged a few words with the solicitor, and then I heard her say distinctly: "I never did approve of Dan's course, but he was not a bad-hearted fellow. Your Mr. Hamilton, peace to his ashes, was the ruin of his nephew, but I am glad that his good sense served him so well during the last month of his life."

"Germain will attend you to-morrow, sir, at six," said George Berkeley. "You'd best keep an eye on him, for he is a lying varlet." The solicitor's answer was lost in the opening and shut-

ting of the front door. Mrs. Berkeley made an observation ending in a laugh, that sounded strangely; and, what sounded yet more strangely, I heard her son's laugh in answer, as his step receded through the hall. Heavens! had they no heart! no feeling! Could he laugh and jest over the bequest of his dead brother, on whose grave the earth was yet moist? I ran down to the library, and entered without prefacing my appearance by a single knock. Berkeley was seated, sharpening a pencil by the table. His hat stood upon it, and the black band encircling it seemed to me like a mockery of woe. Lying beside it was an open letter.

"I am glad you are home," he said, looking up. I advanced, and after the exchange of a few more words, he pushed the letter toward me, adding: "Do you want to see that letter?"

I took it up. It was in an unknown hand, three sheets in length. I read it all through. It contained beside what I had already heard from Livy, several incidents of Father Lucien's intercourse with Dan, with whom I found he was less intimately acquainted than I had been led to suppose. I could not read it without deep emotion, and when, as I laid it down, I glanced at the unconcerned expression of the lieutenant's inflexible face, my indignation obtained the mastery over me at once.

"George Berkeley," I exclaimed, trembling in every limb, "you do not deserve to have a brother. I had hoped better things of you, — better things of human nature, — I am disappointed."

"In human nature, or in me?"

"I hope to Heaven that if the spirits of the dead do hover over us, his is denied the privilege, as he would be the invisible witness only of the coldness with which his name is mentioned, and the ingratitude with which his kindness has been received."

"Indeed! I do hope with you that there are no ghosts, for I think it would be unfortunate if Dan could not rest even in his grave."

I looked at him for a moment bewildered; then, the swelling ire in my heart could no longer be repressed. "Ungenerous — unworthy," — I exclaimed; "poor, dear Dan, — the grass not yet grown on his grave, and his memory only considered fit subject for a jest. He left you every cent in his possession, and undoubtedly was more rejoiced at the thought that he was able to enrich you than if he had had the prospect of years added to his life. Even he, however, could scarcely have supposed that you could find in an increase of fortune such abundant consola-

tion for his death. A fine tool he has been for the advancement of the family."

"*Tool*, Miss Brandegee?"

"Yes; your mother found fault with Mr. Hamilton for not leaving his property to a son of hers! Dan has proved quite a convenient channel. He died just in time."

"You are severe," answered Berkeley; but he had become very pale. Was it with anger? I left the room, but before I reached the stairs my heart smote me. Perhaps I had been unjust and uncharitable. I would go back and beg his pardon. I reëntered softly. The lieutenant sat with his head bowed down upon his hands, and his face was thus concealed from view, — and during the short pause which surprise enjoined upon me, I caught several times the convulsive motion of a sob, though its sound was stifled. I crossed the room to his side, and laid my hand on his, saying, "Cousin George, forgive me, — I am very sorry."

But I had raised a storm that I could not quell. There was no answer, only the same spasmodic throb that seemed to run to the very extremities of the strong and manly frame. The hand on which mine was laid was passive, and did not answer to my touch. I might have seen that he was thinking not of me nor of my reproaches, but of the memories that they had conjured up.

"I am very sorry," I repeated. "What can I do?"

"You cannot give me back my brother!" he answered, with a sudden burst of passion, and before I could utter another word, he had arisen and quitted the apartment. I threw myself into the chair that he had just vacated, while I thought over what I had said. What would I not give that those words might be unspoken! I was sure that Berkeley would remember them, and with resentment.

At the dinner-table I sat on his right hand, and most anxiously did I remark every feature of his conduct toward me. It was distant and serious, — I could not call it anger, yet it did not seem like contempt. When dinner was over, I revolved my proper course. An explanation must be made. I seized the first opportunity. Berkeley had walked out to the back-door of the hall with the cigar which he sat solitarily smoking. I came through the parlor in which the other ladies were seated, and stood by his side.

"You are very angry with me, Mr. Berkeley," I said.

"Not in the least," he answered.

"Not angry, after what I said this morning!" I responded. "What did you think then?"

"What *could* I think on being informed that the loss of my brother was repaid by his money, — that Dan Berkeley was regarded by his family as a tool, — a channel for its aggrandizement?"

The import of my answer I do not exactly recollect, but the manner with which it was given, certainly lent an unnecessary emphasis to the assurance that I should never be able to forgive myself for the injustice I had done him, and that I should be quite unhappy, not to say utterly wretched, if he despised me for it. Berkeley's reply was reassuring to the last degree, — of course it was all forgiven and forgotten, though there was very little to forgive.

But this day had revealed to me the true state of affections which I had hitherto thought were disengaged. I loved George Berkeley, — and that love had become an all-absorbing passion. Sedulously did I guard the secret; for, fully confident that my love was unreturned, I feared nothing so much as its discovery by its object. In spite of my efforts to disentangle myself from the folds of this rash affection, I found myself unable to stifle its growth, whilst I met Berkeley daily and hourly; and to avoid entirely the dangerous pleasure of his society was impracticable.

Near the close of the following week Mrs. Berkeley received a despatch from England, conveying the intelligence that my father was dead.

It was the first great trial of my life, and though the blow was somewhat deadened by my late affliction, I sank under it, giving way to a physical depression, from the effects of which I did not soon recover. Mrs. Berkeley, whom, as I naturally supposed, I could best look for sympathy, seemed to retire more than ever within herself, and the consciousness of my isolation served to render me constantly dejected, and apparently sullen in mood.

From Hinda I was becoming more and more estranged. She had pursuits and pleasures of her own to which I had no wish to be admitted, nor did I waste much thought on their probable character.

One evening, after a day of more than ordinary depression and gloom, I sought my own apartment, and after sitting for an hour or more lost in meditation till it seemed that my brain would burst, my thoughts wandering alternately from my father to Dan, and from Dan back again to my father, I sought my

couch, wearied both in soul and body, and fell into a troubled slumber. At what time Hinda came up from the parlor I did not know, — of her entrance to the room I was quite unconscious, — and whether she came to bed at all is a matter of question.

My slumber had continued unmolested by any extraneous influence throughout the earlier watches of the night; but I was at last subjected to a series of painful impressions, which had the effect of producing a variety of unpleasant dreams. I found myself continually lost in forests, — sinking in morasses, — falling off precipices, or placed in situations equally disagreeable and precarious. At last, when matters had attained such a pitch that I could no longer retain my state of semi-consciousness, I awoke to a sense of my true position, which was not preferable to the imaginary one in its effect on my senses. There was a bright light in the room, and on the first attempt to stir, I discovered that my feet were tightly bandaged, and that my hands were being tied behind me.

"Hinda! what are you doing?" I exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Nothing, my dear; it is all done," she responded, as she fastened the last knot in the ligature. "You must know, Mary, that you are tied up."

I expressed my entire consciousness of that fact, — also requesting the young lady to release me immediately, otherwise I should call for assistance.

"You may call," she replied, "but I shall in that case put you beyond the power of speech.

"May I ask what it is all for?" I inquired.

"I should think that your conscience would tell you what it is for," responded the angelic Miss Wriothesley, as she walked to the closet where her cloak was hanging. "Wouldn't you like to send a telegram to Albany now! or a message to Flushing, eh? I'll provide for the possibility this time! I'll have you breaking up my marriage, and spoiling my plans! I'm going to run away, Miss Brandegee! Wouldn't you like to alarm the household?"

"No, indeed, Hinda!" I exclaimed, in overpowering indignation. "I would not utter a syllable to save you from any thing short of perdition. Your behavior is both cowardly and wicked. Untie my hands, — I insist."

"That is right, my dear, insist, it shows your spirit; but I cannot untie you yet. I'll turn you over to the light, — so that you may gather some little idea of what is going on in the world."

Hinda changed my position as she spoke, rolling me over to the very edge of the bed; after which, she proceeded to pack some articles into a small travelling-bag, interspersing the operation with many regrets that she should be unable to take any greater supply of baggage. The bag was at last locked, — the young lady's bonnet-strings adjusted, — and her preparations apparently complete.

"Now, then, I'm going." She returned to the bedside. "Will you promise me to be perfectly still, and not call anybody until some one comes up in the morning to see what the matter is?"

"I shall promise nothing of the kind," I answered. "On the contrary, so soon as you have left the room, I shall call for relief."

Hinda displayed a bottle containing a clear, glassy-looking liquid, to my eyes, — "Do you know that?"

"It's chloroform," said I.

"Yes, my dear, — it's chloroform," and she flourished the bottle.

"Take care," I exclaimed, apprehensively, "that is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a fool."

"Very fortunate that it is not in *your* hands, according to that," said Hinda. "Now, then, unless you immediately promise as I require, I shall throw you into a swoon. You may take your choice, — to be silent, either with the chloroform or without it."

I had always felt a profound dread of all stupefying drugs, and the appearance of one so powerful in its effects, in the hands of a person whom I knew to be inexperienced in its administration, was calculated to inspire me with awe. In a subdued tone, I promised neither to stir nor speak.

"I'm very sure you won't *stir*, my dear," she responded, "and I shall trust to your word that you will not speak."

She took her bag on her arm, — then returned to my side.

"You dishonorable little wretch!" she exclaimed. "Wouldn't you like to be writing a telegram now? I see you at it! I am tempted to give you the chloroform in spite of every thing. Will you swear not to speak?"

I signified assent, though my blood was boiling.

"To show that I bear you no malice, I will give you a little parting advice. All this mourning through the day, and crying half the night, has not been lost on me, — and it existed long before Mr. Brandegee's death gave it an excuse. You are in love with Lieutenant Berkeley, but you might as well be in love with Jerome Bonaparte. George Berkeley does not love you, does

not admire you, cannot get up the slightest shadow of interest in you, and he *never will.* Mark my words, — he never will. As I have already told you, he said himself that if *you* had been going to run away with Jones, he would not have taken a single step to prevent you. My advice to you, then, is to cease making a fool of yourself about a man who cares nothing for you. You worship the ground he walks on, and if he does not see it, it is simply because he does not care to look, — but if you proceed in this insane way, he will see it without looking.

"Now I am going to stand the hazard of the die. You are to lie here, tied hand and foot, until somebody comes, in the course of the morning, to see if you and I are not suffocated by gas, or some such thing as that. I shall not make a fool of myself by any tender adieus. Good-by."

Hinda turned out the light, leaving me in utter darkness, and made her exit softly from the room.

By this time my position had become peculiarly unenviable. My first sensations had been those of surprise that Hinda could have compassed the exploit of my bondage without awaking me; but this marvel was shortly banished by such decided inconvenience as to leave no room for considerations on the manner of its accomplishment. I had been secured with little mercy. My shoulders, wrists, and ankles, were aching violently, and the distant prospect of relief made my situation altogether insupportable. Had any individual loosened the ligatures for two or three inches only, I should have been the most grateful of beings. As the minutes sped on, my pain increased, like the velocity of a falling body. My indignation against Hinda rose in proportion, — to be tied up like an ox in a blacksmith's shop was bad enough, — but to have been threatened with chloroform, and forced to promise not to open my lips, galled my pride to the last degree. Daylight broke into the room, — one after another, the servants went down. Reynolds was the only one that passed my door. Aside from the pain that I felt in the veins of my wrists and ankles, now swollen around the cords, my uncomfortable position caused me the utmost distress. Deprived of the facilities for supporting my equilibrium, I durst not turn lest I might fall on my face and suffocate.

Well, I thought to myself, there must be an end to it by and by. I calculated the time that must elapse before I could be released. Suppose nobody should come to call us to breakfast until it was nearly over, — I might be condemned to stay here, nursing my indignation, till ten or eleven o'clock. The minutes wore on,

— the room grew lighter and lighter. I heard the whole household in motion. Lieutenant Berkeley passed my door. I was desperate. At the same instant I heard Mrs. Berkeley's voice on the staircase.

"Hinda, you insane little fool, where have you been?"

"Out walking," was answered, in tones which were indisputably those of the fair Wriothesley. Horrors! she had come back. I would rather have lain tied up two days, with nothing to eat, than behold her visage. I heard her voice just outside my door, answering some question from Mrs. Berkeley. "Yes, it was another attempt at an elopement, I confess; — I'll come down and tell you all about it."

My door was opened, and Hinda put in her head cautiously. "Ah! all safe, I see," she remarked, "I thought you might be standing behind the door, armed with an iron bar." She entered, bustled around the room a minute, then, laughing nervously, began to saw asunder the cords confining my limbs. "How many telegrams have you written since daybreak, eh? Mary, you really, — ha! ha! you really must forgive me, — but I, — I couldn't, ha! ha! do any thing else. Jones advised me to tie you, or strangle you, or some such thing as that."

"I hate you!" burst from my lips.

"I know you do, — it's perfectly natural, — people always hate those whom they have injured. I don't hate *you*, however, my dear! I am as fond of you as ever, in spite of all your treachery."

I sprang up the instant the last cord was cut, and, without speaking, immediately proceeded to dress myself. Throughout the whole process Hinda rallied me incessantly. I made no reply, however, and, so soon as my rapid toilette was complete, descended to the breakfast-room. Here I found the whole family at table, all discussing Hinda. Mrs. Berkeley could not conceive why she had come back again, — she did hope that should Hinda attempt to elope the third time no one would try to prevent her.

I now took occasion to petition for another room, saying that I could not endure occupying the same apartment with Hinda for another day. I enlarged on the infamous manner in which I had been treated, — and, as no one could deny that it was highly reasonable to prefer a sleeping-apartment in which there was no danger of being hand-cuffed or drugged before morning, Mrs. Berkeley granted me permission to remove to Gatty's room in the course of the day. As this arrangement was concluded, Hinda appeared at the door, with the appropriate question: "May I come in?"

"By all means," responded Mrs. Berkeley. Hinda, in nowise abáshed, settled her sleeves, and took her place at the table, though I noticed that she looked scrutinizingly at each member of the company. Mrs. Berkeley desired to know to what fortunate accident we owed the pleasure of Miss Wriothesley's society on the present occasion.

This hint was quite sufficient to dissipate whatever small degree of restraint the young lady might have experienced on her entrance. She told the story immediately, and her coffee was cold long before the history was done. "You see, my dear Mrs. Berkeley," she said, "Jones and I made up our minds to be married. Jones was fully possessed with the idea that he could not live without me, and I was wholly decided that I never should get rid of him in the world unless I should marry him. I knew that though neither you nor the General would give a formal consent, yet you would both be glad to have me off your hands, and it would make a very nice little excitement of the whole matter, if we could run away. Yesterday I happened to meet Jones in an omnibus, and he was so importunate that I promised to meet him early this morning at the Hudson River Railroad depôt, take the first train to Albany, and be married in that city, where Jones had the clergyman all engaged.

"I arrived at the depôt before it was open, and was forced to promenade on the flags for some time before I was let in. Of course I was the first one there, and it was so long before Jones's arrival that I began to think he was not coming. At last he appeared, and we sat down together to talk awhile, for it wanted some time still of the hour when the train should leave.

"In the first place, I recounted what trouble I had had in getting away, — how I had been obliged to dispose of Mary, and how I was afraid Lieutenant Berkeley had heard me leave the house, and so on. Then Jones told me all about the opera last night, and the new trotter, and the news which was received at the Times office at two o'clock this morning, manifesting that the idea of marrying me had kept him awake and wandering about town all night. By and by I noticed that the hand on the little depôt clock was making quite a note of time, — also that the passengers for the early train were going out on the platform. Jones looked at the clock also several times, and, at last, he turned to me saying, 'Hinda, I think it is time for me to buy the tickets.'

"'Well, Mr. Jones,' said I, 'why under the sun *don't* you buy the tickets?' Jones said it was for the very best reason in the world, namely, that he had no money. He would be obliged to

depend on my purse for assistance. I assured him that he could not depend on any thing less able to assist him, for I hadn't a cent. Neither one of us had a cent! and what was worse, Jones didn't know of a place where he could borrow a cent, unless he should go down town, and he wasn't sure he could get it then, on his slender stock of credit.

"Well, there we sat, — Jones looking ready to hang himself, and I feeling perfectly disposed to see him hanged, — and somebody said, 'all aboard,' and the cars went off, and the door was shut, and Jones and I were left alone in the depôt. I read him quite a long lecture, advised him the next time he laid his plans to be married, to provide himself with sufficient cash to defray the expenses, and assured him that I would never make a fool of myself by trying to run away with *him* again. Then I forbade him to follow me, on pain of my mortal displeasure, and I came away, leaving him in the depôt alone with the clock, looking the very picture of despair."

Hinda embellished this narration in so lively a manner as to contfibute much to the amusement of her auditors. Even I could scarce resist a smile; and the other members of the party, who had no cause for indignation against her, interspersed the course of the history with frequent bursts of laughter. There was, however, one exception. Lieutenant Berkeley sat with his fine eyes keenly fixed on Hinda's face, and beyond a slight movement of the muscles round his mouth, no sign of peculiar diversion was visible.

Hinda concluded by remarking that the only source of anxiety was Mary. "I had left her all tied up," she said, "under a promise to call nobody, — besides I knew she would not. I left an outlandish-looking room on purpose."

Miss Wriothesley was in her element, evidently exulting in the consciousness of universal applause. There was one damp however to her gaiety, for I heard her remark to Livy afterward: "That confounded lieutenant looked at me all breakfast-time as though he did not believe one word I said."

"In the course of the morning, Hinda went away in the carriage with Livy. I had withdrawn to the front parlors, and, screened by the curtains, endeavored to fix my mind on the perusal of a book. Soon after, Lieutenant Berkely came up the doorsteps, admitted himself by his key, and passed up the staircase. A few minutes passed, when, as Reynolds answered one of the countless rings at the front door, I heard a familiar voice in the hall asking if the ladies were in.

It was Jones. "And Lieutenant Berkeley, Reynolds," he said, — "I wish to see him too, — all the family."

Jones entered the parlor wherein I was, and bade me good-morning with a dejected air. He presented a woe-begone appearance, very much the reverse of his usual aspect. His cravat was not in its usual "miraculous tie," — his whole attire was compatibly negligent, — his eyes were sunken, — his face pale, — his manner *distrait*; and when he informed me that he had just been to sell his wedding-clothes, I began to harbor some fear lest his brain might be affected. Mrs. Berkeley was the first who appeared, and she immediately informed Mr. Jones, in a dignified manner, that after his conduct in decoying her husband's ward from the house, she wondered that he could present himself again with any idea of welcome.

Jones begged that Mrs. Berkeley would only listen to him a few minutes. On this, Mrs. Berkeley asked him to be seated, and on the appearance of the lieutenant and Gatty, Jones entered upon his errand by declaring that he was a very ill-used, in fact quite a desperate man. Mrs. Berkeley said she "reckoned he would always continue so, while he attempted to run away with young ladies without a penny in his pocket."

This Mr. Jones did not understand. When the explanation was afforded, Jones said that he was very much surprised, not so much that Miss Wriothesley had coined a story in so short a time, as that, with her faculty of invention, she had not made it more plausible. He threw two tickets for Albany on the table, and then proceeded to unveil, that he had waited at the depôt for Hinda some time, — that having taken tickets so soon as the office was opened, he had gone through the cars to prospect the chances of any of their acquaintances being on the train, that on his return to the depôt where he had left Miss Wriothesley, he found, to his astonishment and dismay, that she had suddenly and singularly changed her mind. In vain did Jones beseech, interrogate, and make every representation he could think of to induce her to adhere to her original engagement. Hinda was inflexible. In keen distress of soul, Jones saw the cars depart without him and his lady-love. Hinda now besought him to go; but go Jones would not, until the freak was explained. Hinda then said that she had just met a gentleman of her acquaintance whom she had been obliged to tell that she had only come to see a friend off by that train, and that the gentleman had offered to set her down at Mrs. Berkeley's door, and had gone to call a carriage. Jones wondered who it could

be with whom Miss Hinda preferred a ride of fifteen minutes to a marriage with him, — and the query was settled by the appearance of Mr. Jonas Hunter. Hinda suffered herself to be led away without a single look at Jones, who declared that all which had prevented his shooting the infernal old scoundrel on the spot, was the want of a pistol.

Mr. Jones's four auditors had listened with attention, — Mrs. Berkeley with lips compressed, — Gatty sadly, — I, with a feeling of positive exultation. Jones proceeded to expatiate on the treatment which he had always received at Miss Wriothesley's hands, — he had been constantly encouraged, and as constantly deceived. This retrospect of his wrongs led Mr. Jones to express himself with increased emphasis. "She's a base, unprincipled woman, Mr. Berkeley," he said. "The only reason that she deferred this marriage with me till to-day was because she was in hopes that *you* might fall in love with her, — then she despaired of you, and fell back on me, — but good Heavens! as soon as she saw that old fellow, crippled with rheumatism and gout, and the Lord knows what, beside, she walked away without *looking* at me; — upon my soul she did not look at me! It's — it's abominable, — it argues a most unfathomable depravity of character. I renounce her forever, — the whole sex, — I've done with them all, — and I've a broken, bleeding heart to carry with me to my grave. I'm a wreck, my dear fellow, — positively, I'm nothing but a wreck."

In a state of mind which was evidently far from enviable, Jones took his departure. When the lieutenant returned from accompanying the departing guest to the front door, he found his mother in earnest consultation with Gatty and me, as to what was to be done with Hinda. Gatty pronounced her scheming and artful, and ventured her suspicion that she had gone riding about in the vicinity of the hotel at which Mr. Hunter had stopped; — she had wondered that Hinda ever could be willing to throw herself away on Jones. While the subject was still under discussion, there came a note from Mr. Hunter to Mrs. Berkeley, dated from the Astor House, containing the intelligence that he had come the night before from Buffalo *via* Albany; that he intended remaining a week or two longer in the city, — would do himself the honor of paying his respects in person very shortly, etc.

"Of course he must be invited here," said Mrs. Berkeley, "as he promised to come at the time Judith was married. I will ask him for next week, and what *shall* we do with Hinda?"

Gatty suggested that a few thousand dollars should be settled on Hinda, and that she should be allowed to marry Jones. But to this there were two strong objections. One was that it would create no end of scandal for the Berkeley's to sanction such a match; another, the want of a few thousand dollars to throw away. Mrs. Berkeley proposed shutting her up; but the lieutenant declared that to be out of the question, and suggested, as the only alternative, that she should be sent to Washington the very next morning with Mrs. Ostrander. This idea was regarded with favor. Reynolds was despatched with a note to Mr. Hunter, inviting him to come to Twenty-third street on the following day, and Lieutenant Berkeley went to see Mrs. Ostrander. The answers returned were both favorable. Mr. Jonas Hunter accepted the invitation; and Mrs. Ostrander would be very happy to take charge of Miss Wriothesley, who was to meet her at Jersey ferry, to go by the early train to Philadelphia.

These arrangements were completed long before the return of Livy and Hinda, who came in a little before six o'clock. The dismay of Miss Wriothesley, on being informed that she was to leave the house so precipitately, can better be imagined than described. Hinda was sure she never could get ready in the world, — she should not be able to pack half her things. Very well, Mrs. Berkeley said; as she had attempted to leave the house that very morning without taking *any* of her things, what she could not pack now she might leave behind her. Hinda then alleged that she could not rise at so early an hour. Mrs. Berkeley was inexorable. She could not see why Hinda should be less able to rise early one day than another, especially as she was required to lose no time in tying people's arms and ankles. Hinda now resorted to her last argument. She burst into tears, and declared that she had entirely reformed. Mrs. Berkeley hoped she had, but did not believe it. Hinda protested she would be guilty of no misdemeanors in future. Indeed she had reformed, — she had been to a prayer-meeting that very day, as Livy could testify. She begged Mrs. Berkeley to give her one more trial, — she would be discretion personified, — she was very sorry for the way in which she had treated dear Mary, — and begged the lieutenant to intercede for her.

I thought Aunt Judith seemed somewhat disposed to relent, for, as Hinda went upstairs, she remarked that it *was* rather hard on the poor little wretch, and asked the lieutenant, with an undecided air, if he thought it advisable to let her remain through Mr. Hunter's visit,

"Oh no, — no, — the devil," answered Berkeley. "Get her off as soon as you can compass it, otherwise you will repent at your leisure."

Mrs. Berkeley evidently felt the justice of the prophecy; consequently, on Hinda's reappearance in the drawing-room, she was informed decidedly that there was no possible alternative, — her reformation could be tested in Virginia quite as well as anywhere else, and her resignation under the sentence might be taken as one confirmation of her sincerity.

Hinda heard the decree in a manner which was quite subdued, and spent the evening up to eleven o'clock in preparations for her departure. Mrs. Berkeley, determined that nothing should be lost by any lack of vigilance on her part, aroused Hinda long before daylight the following morning, informing her that if her bonnet was not on when the carriage came, she would be obliged to go without it. There was no excuse for delay, therefore, when the carriage came punctual to the hour. Hinda took an affectionate leave of Mrs. Berkeley and Livy, and rode away with the lieutenant and Gatty, who accompanied her to the depot where she was to join Mrs. Ostrander.

Mrs. Berkeley did not cease to congratulate herself all the morning on her successful disposal of her troublesome charge. But there was another subject that occupied my busy speculations, — this was the distressing wonder whether, in repeating to me a speech of Lieutenant Berkeley's that had rankled sorely in my mind, Hinda had adhered to the exact truth. To discover this there was, of course, no way except to ask him, and I seized the first opportunity. Happening to meet him in the hall in the course of the morning, just as he was leaving the house, I said I must detain him one minute to inquire whether he had ever assured Miss Wriothesley that in case I were to run away with Ramsay Jones he should take no trouble to recapture me.

I expected an instant denial. My heart was already palpitating in the blissful anticipation. Berkeley consumed a minute in lighting his cigar, then a half-minute more in regarding me with a very penetrating gaze, after which deliberation he replied, that it was very true, — he had said so.

I hazarded a second question, with some tremor in my tone. "Would you say the same thing now, Mr. Berkeley?"

"Precisely," replied the lieutenant, with a smile. "Therefore if you have such a step in contemplation, you may rest fully assured of the facilities."

Those words I brooded over throughout the rest of the day.

Singularly short-sighted as to the compliment implied in his assurance, I read in it nothing but such complete indifference to me and to my fate, that I supposed the interest which he might naturally feel in saving the honor of his father's ward would be entirely annulled were it compromised by my own thoughtlessness. I was miserably unhappy, nor did any circumstance in the course of the week ensuing serve to lighten this depression.

Mr. Hunter remained but a few days. Our departure to Virginia was appointed to take place near the first of May. I contemplated the prospect of this retirement with pleasure which was alloyed only by the reflection that it would involve a renewal of my intercourse with Hinda, — intercourse which I resolved should never again become an intimacy. My condition, in a financial point of view, was certainly not improved, for though my father had left me all his property, it was with the proviso that but a small portion of the interest, sufficient to defray my current expenses, should be at my command, until I came of age, when I was to enter upon undisturbed possession of the whole.

Mrs. Berkeley was accompanied, on her return to the country, by Olivia, Gatty, and myself; Hinda was added to our party on our arrival in Washington, and a little after the first of May we were all settled again quietly at the General's country-seat.

Months passed away. In the early part of August, Jack was home on a short visit, and Mrs. Berkeley seemed to have no objection to his being thrown in company with me. Perhaps I did her injustice, but I did harbor the suspicion that she thought it much easier to unite Jack and me in the bonds of matrimony, than to institute a lawsuit to break up the will by which John Brandegee had left his fortune to his adopted daughter, instead of his nephew. But between this worthy scion of the house of Berkeley and myself there existed no attraction, either mutual or singular. He had a certain *brusque* manner which I always found disagreeable in the extreme. I was under an unpleasant restraint in his presence; and, on the few occasions when we were alone, we either sat without the exchange of a syllable, or engaged in a kind of sharp raillery not calculated to promote an amiable disposition on either side.

Jack had been home but a very short time, when a letter from Lieutenant Berkeley requested him to prolong his stay until the arrival of the latter, which would take place in the course of the next ten days.

One morning we, that is, the younger females of the family, were all in Mrs. Berkeley's room. I was busy with accounts;

the other three were engaged with sewing and embroidery, and discussions as to the remaining virtue in some half-worn silks, when Mrs. Berkeley came in. She said that Jack had been talking to her about having a portrait of Dan painted, — the only picture from which it could be copied was in the drawer of a bureau to which Gatty had the key, and she bade Gatty go at once and get it.

Before she had returned from the execution of the errand, Jack entered the apartment. As I formerly stated, this young man and I were never very partial to each other, and his behavior on the present, as on every other occasion, was not such as to elicit any special admiration from me. He gathered up the folds of his dressing-gown, and sat down by the window, that, as I presumed, the fumes of his cigar might escape, but the wind being in the wrong quarter, the smoke was all blown back into the room. As he put the finishing touch to the free-and-easy style of his *entree*, by elevating his feet till they rested on the marble top of his mother's bureau, I concluded that he intended to pay us quite a visit, and consequently should have felt a little dismayed had I not been interested in the question of the picture, which was under discussion. Gatty came back with the keys, exclaimed at the tobacco-smoke, and was consoled by Jack with the information that the cigar was nearly spent. In the mean time, Mrs. Berkeley created quite a revolution in the bureau drawers, tossing their contents hither and thither with little ceremony.

"Why don't you have a place to keep your things in, mother?" asked Jack. "I would, if I were a woman."

"I should think you might, being a man. The last time I was in your room your boots were lying all about the floor."

Jack remarked that there must have been a very slender display. Besides the boots he had on, he had only a pair and a half, the pair he had promised to Jed on condition that he would keep them set up for three days in succession; the next morning Jed took possession, which left Jack in the unfortunate condition of a man who owns only a pair of boots and a half, including those in service.

By the time Jack had finished this explanation, enforced by many notes and comments expressive of dissatisfaction, the picture of which Mrs. Berkeley was in quest had come to light. Jack pronounced it good, but rather too ghostly. It was passed around, and I received it last from Hinda's hand. It was a small daguerreotype, in which the head and shoulders only had been taken, but they were Dan's features, unmistakably; not as he

looked when I first had known him. Jack's critiqué was just, — the face was haggard, and the expression sad, as before his departure for California the previous winter, — but the chiselled lip, the well-cut brow, the pure, clear cast of the features, were true to the life. I sat down at a window, apart from the others, to gaze.

"What's all the rest of that trash in the boxes?" said Jack; "overhaul it." And whilst I still sat intent on Dan's daguerreotype, Mrs. Berkeley threw out of the drawer, cases various in shape and size, which the young ladies and Jack proceeded to inspect. The names of the originals were mentioned, — Jefferson, Nicholas, Gov., Judith, and the other girls, but my attentive ear noted an omission in the catalogue.

"Have you nothing of George?" asked Jack. "Suppose *he* dies and we should want his picture painted?"

"I have only that little Spanish crescent," replied Mrs. Berkeley; "but I've locked it up."

"Unlock it, then, — I want to see it."

Mrs. Berkeley opened another drawer, with many observations on the trouble she was taking, and when the contents of the said drawer had undergone the same overhauling as those of the other, she threw a small article into Jack's lap. As he caught it, I saw the flash of diamonds, and heard him exclaim:

"It must be the setting, — the fellow looks like a prince."

Hinda came up to look over his shoulder. She pronounced it "splendid," asked who had put the diamonds around it, and when Gatty said: "a young Spanish countess," she declared that it must be very romantic, and desired to be made acquainted with the particulars. Gatty gave a superficial narration, as her knowledge of the circumstances was limited. George had carried on a flirtation with a Spanish lady — Donna Inez de Castro — while he was travelling in Spain with Dan. The young lady had fallen desperately in love with him, — how far her brother was in fault, Gatty could not say. She was quite young at the time, and her father, or her brother, or somebody, had discovered the existence of this picture, and had sent it to Dan, who, on his return to America, had given it to Mrs. Berkeley. Hinda's curiosity prompted a score of questions further, to which she received but unsatisfactory replies. Gatty could only say positively, that George had not been engaged to the young lady, as she had been already betrothed to a Spanish gentleman of rank, whom she subsequently married.

In the mean time, I was dying to look at the picture, but I

dreaded Jack's discerning eye, and feared nothing more than the discovery of my secret, which would have been fatal to my happiness. I controlled myself, therefore, with difficulty. A long discussion, to which I listened in calmness, was now held between Mrs. Berkeley and her son, as to the respective abilities of certain portrait painters.

Soon after, the council broke up. Mrs. Berkeley took both the pictures, locked them up in the drawers, threw the keys in her pocket, and went below.

In the afternoon I left Gatty's apartment, where she and Hinda were asleep upon the bed, just in time to see Mrs. Berkeley driving off in the carriage. Livy was down in the woods. What if Aunt Judith had forgotten to lock the drawers! I might go and see. She surely could have no objection to my looking at the miniature. I must make sure, however, that the coast was entirely clear, and I called the girl Loretta, who was passing through the upper hall, and bade her go and see what Master Jack was doing.

Loretta descended with the usual stealthy tread assumed when she went on such errands for Hinda, and, as her head slid past the panel of the open library door, I heard Jack call out, —

"What do you want, Loretta?"

"Only to see what you wus a doin', Mas'r Jack."

"Go to the devil."

"An' see what he's a doin'?"

"Be off. If you spent as much time on your own business as you do in watching my movements, you would be the smartest nigger in Dixie."

Loretta shuffled up to the head of the stairs at which I stood, with the information "dat Mas'r Jack had a piece ob pasteboard and dem little yaller tongs, an' he wus a drawin' a parcel ob roun' an' tree-cornered figgers all ober it."

This was satisfactory. I hesitated no longer, but went to Mrs. Berkeley's apartment, locked the door, looked under the bed and in the closets to make sure that I was quite alone, then tried the drawer. It was fast! My calculations were disappointed, and it was as impossible for me to obtain that picture, as if the barrier had been the breadth of the Atlantic, instead of that inch-thick piece of mahogany. There was one hope left. I had noticed when Mrs. Berkeley left in the carriage, her skirt was trimmed with crape, and, as that which she wore in the morning was plain, was it not possible that, in changing her dress, she had forgotten her keys? I opened the large wardrobe, — saw the

dress, — groped for the pocket, and there, — oh, my evil star! there were the keys!

Fatima did not yield with more tremulous nerves to the impulse of her fatal curiosity, than did I when unlocking the deep drawers of Mrs. Berkeley's bureau, all in a state of royal disorder. I ransacked with the utmost eagerness, and as I tossed aside a pile of ribands and laces, the well-remembered flash of the jewels met my eye. How my hands trembled as they seized upon the picture! It was in an oval case but a trifle larger than a half dollar, around which the diamond setting ran in crescent form, and the semblance of George Berkeley's manly beauty was perfect. Well could I understand the devotion which had prompted the Spanish countess to pour the wealth of her jewels around that beloved head. Formerly possessed by one who had loved the original as she must have loved him, — who on earth had such a claim to it now as one whose heart was filled with like affection! Could Inez de Castro look this day across the waters, and see the likeness of her former lover rescued from its long neglect, — could she behold the kisses that warmed the cold glass, and the tears, as fervent as those which she had shed on the day when she resigned it, — would she not have said to me, "It is yours."

I put the picture in my bosom, and, having locked the drawer and replaced the key in the pocket from which it was taken, I lost no time in leaving the apartment, and shut myself up in my own room to gaze upon my stolen treasure. I scarcely dared to think of the consequences of my rash act. I felt that a terrific ordeal was to await me, but I would walk through the fire without shrinking. This shadow — all of its original I ever could possess — was worth a sacrifice, — a world of anxiety, — aye, a crime.

The shades deepened. Evening was approaching, and, as the roll of the carriage wheels announced Mrs. Berkeley's return, I remembered that the dinner hour was near, and commanded myself so far as to make my preparations, though my agitation was excessive. Before I went down, however, I had become tolerably composed, for I felt that my safety depended chiefly on my deportment.

Before I went to bed, I pondered well what means would be most effectual for the security of my treasure. In the daytime, of course it would be best secreted in the bosom of my dress, but what to do with it at night, was the question. Under the pillow had naturally suggested itself to my mind, but to that there were

considerations attached. What if Gatty or Hinda should come in while I was dressing! I decided, at last, to leave it in the pocket of my dress, upon the foot of my bed. The next morning Mrs. Berkeley left, to be gone till the evening. For that day I was safe.

But I found that I had congratulated myself too soon. Mrs. Berkeley had scarcely gone when I heard Jack asking Gatty if she had her mother's keys, and, on hearing the affirmative response, he desired her to go and get Dan's daguerreotype for him, as Mrs. Berkeley kept putting him off, and he feared lest he should go away and forget it. When Gatty came down with Dan's picture, I heard her tell her brother that the crescent was gone. Jack said she must be mistaken; she insisted that she was not, and they both decided not to mention the matter to Mrs. Berkeley, as it was quite possible that she had put it away, and if not, there would only be a storm.

No more was said then. I was surprised to find that the miniature had been so much under Gatty's supervision, and feared lest Mrs. Berkeley might not be as thoughtless of its safety as I had imagined. In the afternoon, I came down to the library to write a letter, and was scarcely seated at the table, when Jack Berkeley came in.

He sat down at one of the windows, and resumed his old habit of bantering me. I endured it for some time, till my patience at last giving way, I started around, and declared that if he did not desist I should leave the room.

"Oh, no!" he said, rising and advancing toward me. "Come, Mary, kiss and be friends, — I did not mean to make you angry."

I opened my eyes in astonishment. A sort of terror seized me. I lost my self-command entirely, and before I had time even to think, I had started up and struck him a violent box on the ear.

"That's just the thing! there's a penalty," he exclaimed, at the same moment that he caught me round the waist and drew me to him. Whether he would have kissed me or not, I do not know, — if he had, I should never have forgiven him, but my efforts to free myself were, as he must have perceived, not those of mere affected coyness.

"You need not struggle so," he said; "the woman does not live who can say I ever kissed her against her will. What the deuce is this?" he exclaimed, for, as his hand was slipping away from my Grecian bodice, which had approached a state of annihilation during the strife just recorded, it crossed the crescent,

which had slid down to my waist. "Do you wear outternuts under your dress?"

"Go away, Jack, — I think you extremely rude," I said, when once more free. "I shall take my letter upstairs and finish it."

"I beg your pardon, my dear cousin, really I did not intend to be rude, but I should like very much to know what that thing is. If it did not *look* so devilish odd, I would not say a word."

"Well, it's a silver dollar," said I.

"Oh, well, — that explains. Strange place to keep it, you must allow. I suppose you don't wear pockets. Of course it could not, by any possibility, have been that little crescent medal of the Countess de Castro?"

I felt that I turned very pale. I was wholly unprepared for this attack. I sank down in my seat, and stammered, as soon as I could at all command my voice, "Why — why — I — what could I do — what could I want with that?"

"Captivated by George's beauty, of course," Jack answered, with a laugh. I had recovered my self-possession, declared I could not endure his nonsense, and, collecting my writing materials, hurried upstairs. What could he have meant? Was it a mere random shot, or a shrewd suspicion? and was I to be such a coward when Mrs. Berkeley discovered the loss? From these unpleasant ruminations I was aroused by Jack's voice calling my name below in the hall. I went out, and, leaning over the balusters, asked what he wanted.

"You did not go upstairs to cry, I hope?" said he.

"What about?"

"Why, about that neat little guess of mine," he answered, with a laugh.

"I don't know what you mean," said I, and went back to my room, fearing that it would be a more difficult matter than I had imagined to baffle the scent on the trail of my precious possession. I scarcely dared to venture down to dinner. Gatty did not once revert to the fact of the picture's having been missed by her, as I did not suppose that she would, and Jack made no allusion to it. I trembled all the evening, and was vastly relieved when Mrs. Berkeley, at ten o'clock, bade one of the servants to take writing materials to her room, a sure precursor of her withdrawal from the parlor.

"Jack," she said, as she rose to leave the apartment, "I'll give you that daguerreotype of Dan's in the morning."

"I have it," responded Jack, who was playing chess with Hinda, "and, by the way ——" I looked around at him in alarm,

and he checked himself with a slight smile and scarcely perceptible shake of the head, to signify, as I supposed, that I need apprehend nothing from him.

"Well, Jack, what is it?" questioned his mother, who had paused on the threshold.

"Nothing to signify," he answered, and Mrs. Berkeley went on.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. I heard the clock strike eleven — twelve, — some minutes went by. I changed my position, and just as I was falling asleep, I heard Mrs. Berkeley's door as it was opened, and her footstep in the hall.

My guilty conscience smote me. For the first time I wished the picture back in the drawer. I heard the bell, which hung beneath the eaves of the house, pulled as though by an impatient hand. I rose softly, and, laying my throbbing temples against the door, stood listening with a beating heart, and senses keenly alive to every sound. I heard Mrs. Berkeley's voice, doubly loud and clear in the stillness of the night, addressing an order tc Christian from the window.

"Go down to Mr. M'Glinchey's and send him up here immediately, — then take Jed with you to the quarters, and rouse every black devil on the plantation; do you hear?" To this, "Yes, Missus," was returned, and Mrs. Berkeley recrossed the hall, and her door was shut.

I lay down again, anxious and miserable enough, but as mine was now literally a bed of thorns, I could not long retain my position. I rose and came to the window, outside which shuffling feet and whispering voices soon were heard. The negroes in the out-houses by the stables were issuing one by one into the moonlight.

"Is dat you, Christian? wats de matter?"

"Dunno, Jed; it's a reg'lar mus ob some kind, — we'se got to run down to de cabins, an' rout up de folks."

The other negroes, presenting an array of anxious faces, were making earnest appeals to Jed and Christian, who, sensible of the dignity of superior knowledge, concealed their want of it by evading the questions with which they were beset.

"Niggers, you'll all know soon 'nough," said Jed.

"Tell you wat," added Christian, "dere's one ob de awfullest musses on hand! wuss dan de night de young gemmen went arter Miss Kassie. Can't hab any conversation. Pile roun' to de house, niggers, quick as you can, — Missus, she's not to be kep' waitin', an' de sooner you cum de better de chance is. 'Spect we'll all hab to cotch it to-night."

"Lord, Christian, what *ken* hev got inter de Missus!" quoth Jed, as they scampered away down the avenue, their forms soon lost in the trees. The other blacks huddled around to the rear portals of the house. Soon there came a low knock at the door of my room. I bounded forward and threw it open with feverish impatience. Black Netty stood outside.

"Missus wants you right away, Miss Mary." She rapped next at Hinda's door, and I hurriedly proceeded to thrust the hair-pins in my hair, and get into my clothes, and so expeditious was I, that before ten minutes had elapsed from the time I was summoned by Netty, I left my apartment to enter upon the scene which I endeavored vainly not to dread.

The upper hall, into which Mrs. Berkeley's apartment opened, was lighted up, as well as the one below. The house-servants, presenting an assemblage of dismayed visages, were gathered on the upper landing, while Mrs. Berkeley, a bright glitter in her eyes alone betraying the excitement under which she was laboring, was testing them with interrogatories to which all invariably responded by denial. Livy, Gatty, and Hinda had followed me almost immediately. Mrs. Berkeley asked us if we had seen the miniature of her son George which was set in diamonds, and had been taken from the drawer. We all declared that we had not seen it. As these inquiries were concluded, Jack came in, his hair in picturesque confusion, his boot-straps sticking out under his pantaloons, and his black silk cravat in a negligent tie. To his inquiry: "What the devil is the matter?" Mrs. Berkeley responded by repeating the question she had already put to us.

"You haven't roused me up out of bed at this time of night, only to ask about that little gimcrack!" said Jack, who could not regard such unwarranted dispersion of his slumbers with any degree of tranquillity.

Mrs. Berkeley said she had roused him for that purpose, — he had said he procured Dan's daguerreotype himself from her bureau.

Jack replied that he had said nothing of the sort. He had been nowhere near her bureau, — his sister had given him Dan's miniature, — he had not meddled with any other.

"What, *you* know nothing about it!" cried his mother.

"I won't say *that*," replied Jack. I looked at him in anguish, but he had not even glanced at me.

"You *do* know where it is?" continued his mother.

"I don't know where it is. I do know something about it. I know that it was an expensive little nuisance; why the deuce

you could not have kept quiet till to-morrow morning, I cannot conceive."

"Jack," proceeded Mrs. Berkeley, governing herself through the cross-examination like a cat who is awaiting the appearance of the mouse, while the trembling negroes in the hall gazed at the young gentleman with faces on which expectant concern was vividly depicted, "do you know who took that crescent out of my bureau drawer?"

"No, I have only an opinion as to that."

"Well, — tell me your opinion."

"Excuse me, — that is just what I don't intend to tell." He moved toward the stairs.

"Listen to me, sir. I will have every one of these niggers flogged to-morrow, unless you confess."

Jack opened his large eyes in astonishment. "Really, madam," he said, "you talk in a very extraordinary manner. I don't know what you mean, — I've nothing to confess."

At this juncture, the negroes from the plantation with Jed and Christian in the van, a crowd of over two hundred, poured into the hall below. They had evidently obeyed the summons in the utmost haste. Many were with bare feet, and dresses slipping off their shoulders. M'Glinchey came up the broad staircase, his overseer's whip hanging around his neck in its usual graceful knot, and, on learning the cause of the trouble, gave it at once as his opinion that the diamonds were secreted somewhere in the quarters, as more than a score of the negroes on the plantation had been up at the house on the occasion of Mrs. Berkeley's absence. If any of the house-servants had stolen it, it had been undoubtedly smuggled away to some one of the cabins.

This Mrs. Berkeley thought very likely. M'Glinchey now proclaimed among the negroes that if any one of them would confess to purloining the diamonds, nobody should be punished. On the contrary, if no one made such confession, the cabins would be searched from one end to the other, and in whichsoever one the jewels were found, its inmates would receive a castigation, surpassing all mortal conception in its severity. For the next five minutes the negroes protested their innocence, with a clamor that was actually deafening. Mrs. Berkeley bade Jack call to M'Glinchey to cease that silly investigation, and come up for further instructions.

Jack obeyed the order, though he was obliged to call for some time before he could make M'Glinchey hear. Mrs. Berkeley told the overseer that he need no longer defer his search through

the huts, and she sent with him Christian and Jed, the only two of whose innocence she felt fully assured, as they had ridden behind her carriage on both the preceding days. The trio were gone for more than an hour, while the imprisoned souls below kept up a constant, though low-toned, discussion of the unhappy state of affairs. M'Glinchey and his two satellites returned from a search which was, of course, unsuccessful, seeing that its object was fast under my stays. Mrs. Berkeley's excitement, at being thus baffled, attained its highest pitch.

"Jack, will you tell me what you suspect about this theft?" she said to her son.

"No," replied Jack.

"You are an infernal brute; but I will find it in spite of you, if it is in the world." She descended the stairs, and I heard her pronounce sentence on the blacks, in which, amongst the sounds of their screeching and wailing, the words "twelve o'clock to-morrow," "whipping-post," and "lying, thieving, drunken dogs," were the only ones I could distinguish.

I was horrified. This consequence of my fault I had not anticipated. I came up to Jack, who, seated on the balustrade, was looking over it into the hall below, and, in a low tone of anguish, asked if he would not intercede with Aunt Judith in behalf of the servants.

"Intercede with the devil," was Jack's unsatisfactory rejoinder.

The negroes, asserting their innocence in the midst of a terrific bawling which not all their mistress' threats and injunctions could quell, filed out of the hall, and Mrs. Berkeley, having repeated her orders more fully to M'Glinchey, re-ascended the stairs.

"You don't intend to flog them by the wholesale, I hope!" said Jack. "Half the plantation laid up at once, ought to suffice."

"Every one of them," said Mrs. Berkeley, "from the oldest to the youngest, at twelve o'clock to-morrow."

"Not the children, mother!" said Gatty, — "the little children!"

"Yes, I tell you," shrieked her mother; "go to bed all of you! Confound the niggers. Satan has been loose among them long enough."

Remonstrance was useless. We waited for no second dismissal, but retired immediately to our rooms. For the remainder of that night no slumber visited my eyes. I sat down on the floor, and, resting my head against the bedside, I remained a prey

to agonizing thought. I revolved every possible expedient by which I could divert Mrs. Berkeley's wrath from the negroes, without discovering to her the fact of my guilt. The look which Jack Berkeley had given me as I left the hall, haunted my imagination, — it had gone to my soul. But what could I do? To confess would destroy my happiness forever. I knew that ruthless, merciless woman, would not hesitate to reveal the whole to Lieutenant Berkeley. Although the picture against which my heart was beating was, next to its original, the dearest thing to me on earth, I would willingly have resigned it, if the resignation were all. Could the lash but fall on my shoulders, how gladly would I have embraced the alternative; but to look Lieutenant Berkeley in the face if he knew I loved him, — it seemed that I would rather die.

When the morning shone within my chamber, I thought that the hours of the night had flown on wings. With a soul racked by the anguish of a conflict waged between Principle and Life, I dragged myself below. I feared lest my misery should be painted on my face. I heard not one word that was uttered at the breakfast-table, and answered mechanically when I was addressed. Again I sought my chamber. Again my throbbing head was supported in my trembling hands, whilst I considered what I should do.

I determined to put the picture where Mrs. Berkeley would be sure to discover it before twelve o'clock, and thus she might be led to countermand her order. I came down. Jack was sitting on the verandah remodelling a compass. Coming up to him, I said, in a low tone, "Go and ask your mother, Jack, if she would be satisfied with having found the diamonds, were they restored indirectly."

Jack laid down the compass and walked through the hall to the little east parlor. A few minutes after, I heard Mrs. Berkeley say, in a tone that made the hall ring again: "No! should I find it with a thousand duplicates, it will not do. I will never rest till I know who stole it."

I was once more in my lonely room. My brain was reeling. In vain did I say to myself, "I love him, and should he know it, it would kill me!" There was a still, small voice that cried continually in my tortured brain, "It is all thy fault, and, come what may, thou shouldst save those who are to suffer!" I fell on my knees, but I could not insult Heaven by a prayer for direction, when I knew my duty, to such a bitter certainty. The cruel sun moved on to the zenith never so fast, — the stern hand of the lit-

tle clock measured the seconds never so relentlessly. Ten o'clock struck, — eleven, — half past eleven! I shrank, shuddering, away from the consciousness, and buried my face in my nerveless arms. When I looked up, it was a quarter of twelve.

I struggled to my feet, — I took the crescent from my bosom, — I gazed on it for the last time through my scalding tears, — I kissed it madly. Then I rushed from my room, down the stairs, and out on the verandah. Jack was still there, busy with the compass. He looked up as I approached.

"Here!" I cried, catching my breath between the words, with difficulty, "you have fifteen minutes, Jack! Go, and stop the whipping."

Jack laid the box, pivots, and needles on the seat, took the crescent, threw himself over the balustrade of the verandah, and darted off, on a run, in the direction of the quarters. I watched him till his form disappeared among the trees of the avenue, and then, with a dead weight transferred from my conscience to my heart, I entered the library to watch for his return, or for M'Glinchey's appearance, or for whatsoever might be the harbinger of those disclosures that were to wreck my happiness forever.

An hour had not passed before I again distinguished Jack's form approaching on the path, at a slower gait than he had gone. He came upon the verandah to the casement near which I sat, and threw the crescent through the window in my lap. "You may as well keep it now. The niggers are all flogged. Mother changed the hour to six o'clock this morning."

His words were a picture. In its contemplation I underwent a mental paralysis. Throughout the rest of that day I was conscious only of suffering. I saw only two hundred forms bleeding under the lash, and all for my sake, — through my fault. Most gratefully would I have accepted death, could I have known that death were rest. The suffering hours wore on, — day softened into twilight, — twilight deepened into the gloom of evening. I listened to the wind as it moaned through the branches of the trees, — I looked upon the moonless landscape, lit up by a few faint stars, and wondered if that wind had visited, if those stars were glimmering on, any quarter of the globe where dwelt a more wretched soul than mine.

I had not gone to dinner, and at nine o'clock Christian came to tell me it was tea-time. I returned the same reply; I was not going down. Soon after, I heard Jack Berkeley's footstep in the hall. I staggered to the door, and, collecting the last effort of

my failing strength, drew back the bolts. As I fell across the threshold, he caught me in his arms.

"Come, Mary, you are publishing the whole affair by this insane behavior. Wash your face, and come to supper."

"I *cannot*, Jack," I groaned. "I can think of nothing but this awful sacrifice! Tell me, — were they almost killed?"

"Who? The niggers? No, — they are all alive and kicking. You see there was only one priest to a hecatomb, and they made light work of it. You can't help matters now, and you will make them worse if you do not exert yourself."

I did exert myself. Faint and feverish, I went down to the parlor, where the family were assembled. When I gazed at Mrs. Berkeley's finely-moulded features, and recalled the fiendish look that they had worn, — remembered the diabolical cruelty of which she had been guilty, I felt that I hated her, and I wondered that she did not read that hatred on my face. She asked what had been the matter. I answered boldly, that I had lain awake all night, and had had a headache all day. I wondered that I was so well able to counterfeit insensibility, especially as Mrs. Berkeley made the recent castigation of the negroes the subject of discourse throughout the evening, and discussed her suspicion as to the identity of the thief. Some one of the niggers was preparing to run away, she knew. Something was always stolen just before a nigger ran away, and sold to defray the fugitive's expenses.

"You will never find out about the crescent, I fancy," said Jack.

"I will know at the Day of Judgment," answered his mother.

These words rang in my ears. It was eleven o'clock, and the ladies all retired from the drawing-room. I felt as though my brain would burst. I dared not go, guilty as I was, to my couch, without one invocation for protection, and yet I dared not utter a single prayer. I left my room, descended the stairs, and, leaving the house, I crossed the lawn to the out-houses. I went from one to the other without daring to enter, till I came to a low loft adjoining the stables, inhabited by old Cudjoe and his grandchildren. I lifted the latch. Old Cudjoe lay by the fire, in an attitude that seemed to belie Jack's assurance to me. Without addressing him, I made my way up the rude step-ladder to the upper apartment, where a little girl lay sleeping; but instead of the peaceful oblivion of childhood, her slumber was broken by a low, convulsive sob, attesting but too painfully the severe trial to which her nervous frame had been subjected.

"Elamie," I said, as I awoke her, "have you said your prayers to-night?" The little girl replied in the affirmative.

"Did you pray for me?"

Elamie confessed that she had forgotten Miss Mary. I bade her rise and repair the delinquency at once. The child knelt by her bedside, and I heard my name pronounced in the broken tones of her infantile voice, carrying the first sensation of safety to my heart. I sat on the rude bed and wept long after the child had forgotten her troubles in sleep.

A week had passed. General Berkeley came home unexpectedly at its close, and his wife made him acquainted with the loss of the picture on the day of his arrival. Her efforts to find it were still unsuccessful, and there was a decided quarrel between them as to the proper measures to pursue. The General assured her, at last, that he would recover it, if possible, and she consented to leave him to himself that day, to make his discoveries. Though she could not endure to be robbed of a single cent, she trusted that he might be disappointed in the idea that he could succeed where she had failed.

It was the afternoon of Aug. ——, 1860. I was dressing for dinner in my own apartment, and, having gazed for a long time on the picture, bought as it was at so dear a price, I suspended the employment to take a survey of my new hat in the mirror. I wore a black berage dress, made low on the shoulders, and flounced nearly to the waist, and I could not deny that the effect of the long, floating black feather on my gipsey hat was extremely fine. I had just taken it off, and was smoothing my hair, when Mrs. Berkeley came to my door. I admitted her at once. She informed me that dinner had been put off for some time, as the General was down on the plantation, and that Jack had gone to the depôt in the slender hope of meeting his brother George. Mrs. Berkeley's attention was called next to my hat. As she caught it from the dressing-table to look at the feather, she swept off with it, from under it,— Good Heavens! *What!* Yes,— the miniature itself. I bounded forward, but Mrs. Berkeley's eye of lightning and her thought was quick as mine. She sprang at the same moment, and seized my wrists as I grasped the case. Following the last mad, desperate instinct, I struggled, but it was wrested from my hand as easily as from an infant's. I shrank back, cowed and shuddering, under the withering look of that fearful eye, then, without a single word, Mrs. Berkeley left the room.

I was spell-bound, like one in a dream. To ask for mercy

would bring me any thing but that. I must meet my punishment. Yes, I deserved it. When I next saw Berkeley he would know my hopeless passion, or despise me as a miserable thief and coward. I preferred the latter. I would say that I had no money, and meant to sell the diamonds. I drew aside the curtain, and looked down upon the avenue that ran along the hill. There I saw two figures approaching. O God! the bitter cup was then already at my lips, for side by side with Jack, measuring an even, graceful tread upon the beaten path, was — I should have singled him out among ten thousand — Lieutenant George Berkeley.

PART V.

It is said that extremes meet in passion. I had proved the fact that violent joy is sometimes productive of tears, but never till now had I felt as though I could laugh through excess of sorrow. I was lost in a sort of apathetic indifference. A hundred years hence, what would it be to me whether George Berkeley knew that I had loved him or not? And why need it be of any consequence now? My philosophy was banished by the reflection that I was soon to meet him face to face; and, paradoxical as the assertion may seem, I both dreaded and longed for the moment. I paced the room in a sullen anguish till I thought I should become insane with my present suspense; and, forgetting that dinner was deferred, about the usual hour I left my apartment, feeling like a mariner, who, fearful of running on the shoals, is taking the soundings at every foot. The upper hall was growing dark in the gathering twilight, and Christian was just lighting up the dining-room as I descended.

The two brothers were on the verandah. At first I trembled with fear lest the revelation had been made and they were discussing me, but I perceived that nothing more fearful than a telescope on the defects of which Jack was expatiating, was the topic of conversation. As they came in, the lieutenant greeted me with a manner by which I was utterly unable to decide whether Mrs. Berkeley had, or had not, made her revelation. In the dining-room, I found the other girls. The hour had arrived, but neither my aunt nor the General had appeared.

I took refuge, which was, alas! only temporary, behind the crimson curtain that fell before the window, while Jack continued to discuss object-glasses, diverging rays, and convex lenses, — the sounds falling on my stunned and deadéned senses without conveying any other idea than that I, as yet, was not betrayed. Christian had been sent twice by Gatty, and once by Jack, to notify the mistress of the mansion that dinner was wait-

ing, and had each time returned the invariable answer: "Missus will come when Mas'r is in."

At last, I recognized the step of General Berkeley in the hall. George went out to meet him, and his father's greeting was replete with the fondness which he displayed toward all his children. On their reëntrance to the parlor, Christian was once more despatched to Mrs. Berkeley's room to announce that the General had arrived. As I heard the sweep of her dress on the staircase and along the hall, my soul quaked within me. I saw that she had seen George already, as, without speaking to him on her appearance, she fixed her bright black eyes inquiringly on the calm and impassive face of the General.

"Well, Jeff," she said. "Have you the picture? Where did you find it? Who had it? How did you discover it?"

George looked around with a languid curiosity at his mother, who proceeded to taunt the General for some minutes on the ill-success of his search. At last, turning to her younger son, she explained that the picture which was brought from Spain and had been given to her, was stolen from her bureau. "Think of it, *stolen!*" she cried.

"What picture do you mean?" asked George.

"Yours; the one that belonged to the Countess de Castro — set in diamonds."

"Ah! I recollect," said the lieutenant.

"Well," said his mother, after looking at him for a minute expectantly, "have you nothing to say, except that you recollect?"

"No, madam. It is quite as likely to be lost as stolen; and it is fortunate that it is nothing of more consequence."

The General's annoyance seemed to increase with the frown on Mrs. Berkeley's brow. "For Heaven's sake, Judith," he said, "say no more about it. The picture cannot be found; the niggers have all been whipped, and where flogging fails with niggers, nothing else will succeed."

"Yes," said Mrs. Berkeley, "the niggers have all had a whipping that they did not deserve (no great pity, to be sure, as they deserve twenty times as many as they get); to-morrow I intend they shall have a holiday. Don't come in here now," she thundered to the servant who appeared with his tray at the door. "There is the picture," — and she threw it on the dinner-table. "What have you to say now, General Berkeley? What sapient remark can *you* make, George?"

"Only that," he responded, "if it was not lost after all, I cannot see the sense in raising any row about it."

"But who do you think stole it?" cried Mrs. Berkeley, while Jack sat staring at the recovered diamonds, the very picture of amazement.

The General's face flushed. "He shall be sent to the whipping-post even if it were Jed or Christian," he said.

"Whipping-post!" echoed Mrs. Berkeley. "Oh, no! Ladies cannot be punished in that way! Sin becomes venial when committed in the higher walks of society. Come out from behind the curtain, Mary. There, Jeff, is the culprit — the honorable and high-minded Miss Brandegee."

Dead silence fell after this accusation. The sarcastic tones of Mrs. Berkeley's voice were yet ringing on the air of the apartment. I could neither lift my eyes, nor turn my head.

"What — what — how is this?" said the General, when in part recovered from his astonishment. "It cannot be possible! Mary, little Mary, come to your uncle; there must be a mistake here, — explain it."

He held out his hand to me, and I dragged myself forward. The General seated me upon his knee, and laid his hand on my forehead. Then, for the first time, I ventured to raise my eyes. I looked at General Berkeley's compassionate features, and nerved myself at once to the utterance of the falsehood which was to save me.

"Little Mary," said the General, "is this accusation true?"

"It is," I answered.

"You really took that picture?"

"I did."

"And why did you do it?"

"I wanted money," said I, "and the diamonds were valuable."

"Wanted money!" repeated Mrs. Berkeley, in a tone of withering scorn. "And she *stole* to obtain it. A thief! Good Heavens, a thief! Hinda, this leaves *you* far in the shade. George, are you tongue-tied?"

"What can I say," asked her son.

"Say! I don't care what the devil you *say;* only don't stand there with your arms folded looking like an iceberg. What shall we do with this girl? Send her to the State prison?"

"I think," replied the lieutenant, "it would be a better plan to give her the picture."

At these low spoken words, Mrs. Berkeley's eyes flashed with a wrath which had been ill-suppressed throughout the scene, and catching up one of the heavy soup-plates which stood in a pile at one end of the dinner-table, she threw it at the lieutenant

before any one could anticipate the movement. It flew within three inches of his head to the opposite side of the room, where it lay dashed in pieces on the floor.

The object of this demonstration had taken it very collectedly; there was not even the trembling of an eyelash as the missile passed his head. "Mother," said Jack, when will you learn to calculate a parabola? Things in your hands go so crookedly! Six inches higher for the chandelier!"

"Christian," said George to the servant who entered at the moment, "pick up that broken crockery, and bring another plate."

Christian gathered up the pieces in his apron. Mrs. Berkeley took her fan from the sideboard, and desired us all to seat ourselves at the table. Now that the climax of her wrath was reached and the explosion over, I was sure of one peaceful half hour. It was, however, a very painful one for me. I would have given any thing in my possession for the privilege of remaining in my room, but I dared not ask it. The manner of the three young ladies was extremely grave; that of Mrs. Berkeley moody and gloomy, as was usual after her outbreaks of passion. The General was as kind as ever. I could not discover that either of the brothers looked at me at all, until just before we rose from the table, I found George Berkeley's eyes casting through the half-closed lids a searching gaze upon my face. It conveyed a sensation of pain, and as soon as it was possible for me to escape from the dining-room, I repaired to my own apartment.

The moon was rising over the forest, and as I leaned from the casement to gaze on her tranquil splendors, I heard the sound of carriage-wheels on the avenue, announcing the arrival of company. I rang, and asked who had arrived. It was the Tyler family. I determined not to go down until coffee was served, which must certainly be as late as nine o'clock. Till then I might enjoy the luxury of solitude. I thought the moon looked very ugly. I hated her rays; my matches were gone, and I did not care to send for more. Nine o'clock came at last. I recollected that I had left some accounts intrusted by Mrs. Berkeley to my charge, on the library table, and determined to hasten down and get them before my aunt should be aware of the delinquency, if indeed she had not already discovered it. As I entered the hall, I looked up at Dan's old apartment, through the open doors of which the rays of that hateful moon were shining down. I ran down stairs. The steaming coffee was

just vanishing through the dining-room door. Jack, George, and Mr. Tyler, stood in the door of the veranda. The latter bowed to me, but, scarcely stopping to reply to his salutation, I hurried into the library. Seizing the papers which were on the table, I was searching for others in the drawer when the door opened, and I perceived that the lieutenant had entered.

I shut the drawer precipitately, and, as I reached the door, Berkeley detained me by saying that he would like to speak to me.

My heart was palpitating violently. I stood passively at his side, struggling to conceal my agitation, and Berkeley continued:

"I have a reproof to administer. Will you hear it?"

I looked at him with intense emotion.

"I suppose I *must* hear you," I said. "You are going, of course, to exert your brotherly prerogative for the first time."

"For the first time," answered he, "since you have forgotten your duty as a sister, and are disgracing the adoption in this highly improper manner."

I felt, on these words, that I was turning deadly pale. The emphasis with which they were delivered, showed me that Berkeley intended they should be susceptible of a double interpretation.

"What could I do?" I stammered.

"If you were so much in need of money, could you not have written to *me*? Of what use are brothers who cannot be of service in all emergencies?"

"Writing would have taken a long time," I answered. "Besides, it was easier to — to — st — steal."

"Permit me to ask," inquired Berkeley, "who taught you your catechism, and who brought you up in the way you should go?"

"One who went in that way himself, much better than either you or I," I responded.

"Then, of course," said Berkeley, "it is unnecessary for me to tell you that it is a sin to steal."

"Your terms, Mr. Berkeley, are exceedingly plain," I said, resentfully.

"I intend they shall be," answered he. "It is one of my principles to call things by their right names."

My temper was rising. I exclaimed, with heat, "It is a principle I do not admire, sir; and allow me to tell you that I have not stolen."

I turned to leave the room, but Berkeley had taken my hands. "You have not stolen?" he said. "What do you call the act of taking a few diamonds, not your own property? What would he who is sleeping six feet under ground at Los Angelos call it, if he were here and in my place to-night?"

"I do not know, but I should tell him that I am no thief, and he would believe me."

"So will I," said the lieutenant, "if you will tell me what I am to believe. Did you not take the picture?"

"Yes, I took the picture," I answered, finding that my indignant denial had thrown me into a dilemma which threatened detection, "but I am a lady, — not a thief."

Berkeley's clasp tightened on one trembling hand. Dropping the other, he took the flashing crescent from an inside pocket, saying, "I will give it to you. You can have no objection to taking it from your — *brother*."

The mortal dread of his discovering a secret which I feared he already suspected, blinding me to the manifest indelicacy of the act, I took the picture, with a trembling hand, observing, in a tone which I rendered forcibly gay, "You heap coals of fire on my head. As I need money, I will take it."

"Shall I tell you why you took it in the first place?" he asked.

I looked up into his eloquent eyes and answered negligently: "If you *can*, certainly."

"I can, *most* certainly," Berkeley rejoined. "Miss Brandegee, you have taken that picture solely and entirely because you — *love* the original."

I started as though I had received a deadly wound, and, with the courage of despair, struggled for self-command. "Come," I said, "we shall be late in the dining-room," and I took his arm.

"Will you not tell me whether I am right?" he said.

"You are all wrong," I answered, with some difficulty. "Quite a mistake."

"A mistake in such a matter would be an extremely awkward one. I am entirely sure that I have not made one. Am I not right?" he repeated, and, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, he added, "do you love me?"

"You know it! Why do you ask me?" I answered, in a voice broken by the sobs which I strove in vain to stifle. Berkeley released the arm which I had taken, and, folding it around my waist, drew me to his side; whilst, overcome with shame, and lost to every thing but the sense of that rash confession, I buried my face on his shoulder, and wept with all the pangs of the most

acute distress. In vain did Berkeley entreat me to compose myself. I had governed my feelings all the evening. They would no longer be repressed, and it was many minutes before my agitation had at all subsided. I had scarcely recovered myself, when I heard a footstep in the hall, and, as I disengaged myself, Gatty entered.

She announced that coffee was served, and bade us come. I said I did not care for any, and should not go. Gatty opened her eyes in astonishment, and said that her mother desired my presence in the drawing-room. After that, I had no alternative. While there, seated next Miss Tyler, and keeping up a show of attention to her conversation, I nevertheless found time for the retrospect of George Berkeley's late interview with me; and I recollected, what the excitement of my feelings had banished from my consideration before, that in drawing from me the acknowledgment of an attachment to him, he had neither prefaced nor followed it by any like admission on his part. Of that he must be quite as well aware as I, and what could I think of his honor, if he allowed the matter to rest on a basis so equivocal?

It was a weary evening for me, though the rest of the party in the drawing-room were gay and merry over the wine and cards. The guests took their departure late. The carriage had just rolled away, and Hinda and I were standing on the piazza, when George Berkeley walked out of the hall.

"Come," he said, in a low tone, to me.

"What for?" I asked.

"I will tell you directly." He was already half way down the steps, where he had stopped to light a cigar. For one second I hesitated. It was neck or nothing with me now, however. I caught my gipsey hat from the window-seat, determining to give him one opportunity. It was only fair.

"Won't you have a shawl on your bare shoulders?" called Hinda, as I ran down the steps and took Berkeley's arm. I declined the offer, and for some time we walked on without a word on either side, until we came to the slope whose further extremity was shut off by the great gates from the broad stretch of plantation.

"Is it not time to go back?" I said, at last.

"Leave the going back to me," said Berkeley.

I offered no further objection. A few minutes' pursuit of the pathway through the grove brought us to a broad ledge of rock that ran sloping down to the water. It was a spot that had bounded my last evening ramble with Dan the summer before.

Bushes and other rough plants grew out of the crevices and fissures, while the niches in the stone-work formed natural seats under the trees overhanging the ledge. The moon was now high in the heavens, and made visible only to veil with more uncertain obscurity the tall trees reflected in the river, and the little boats lying in the rushes along the shore; and the heavy dew on the grass, lit up by her rays, formed a long chain of light on the banks. The shrill chirp of the cricket sounding under the rocks, and the mournful chant of the whippoorwill coming up from the hollow, mingled with the songs and laughter of the negroes, who, returning from their evening frolic on the distant plantation, woke the still, calm air of the night with their melodious voices.

I had taken a seat on the rude niche which was nearest the slope, and, as I refused him a place at my side, Berkeley reclined on the rock at my feet.

A few minutes went by, during which my thoughts were divided between the wish that I had never known him, and the painful contemplation of his handsome features, which the moonlight rendered of an ashen and unearthly hue. The spiral wreaths of smoke rolled off to the southward, each slender cloud growing fainter and fainter, till they had died away altogether, and I saw that the light was out. Berkeley threw the half-finished cigar into the river, and looked up into my face.

"Mary," he said, "do you love me?"

"You have asked me that question once before," I said.

"I shall probably ask it a thousand times again, in the course of the next few days," he responded.

"I shall never answer it again!" I exclaimed, "at least never while it is unauthorized by any reciprocal avowal."

"Ah, there must be an avowal on my side," said Berkeley. "Well, will you hear me now?"

"I will hear you now, or never," I answered.

Berkeley seated himself by my side, and the delinquent avowal was made in words profaned by repetition, while I listened with a heart too full for utterance. The emotions which thronged it it was impossible to analyze. He loved me, — and he told me so. I believed him, and was happy, — happy as they are who listen to the hollow story, and dream not of its falsehood, — happy as they are to whom that language is familiar, before the feelings which have prompted and responded to it are dead within their souls. I looked up to see the light flashing from those bright, dark eyes; I listened to the sweet and earnest tones of the deep-toned, manly voice; I no longer repulsed the arm that

encircled me; no longer turned away from the burning kisses which fell on my quivering lips. From that time forward, he was mine, and I was his, till death. He pledged himself to love me first, — me last, — me alone, forever; and while the sparkling dew-drops fell upon us from the overhanging branches of the old oak tree, I little dreamed that its foliage would not lie, in the coming autumn, withering at the roots, before the promise would be broken which my lover swore was as fast as the granite hills, and as unalterable as the Persian law!

The hours wore on. The moon — how beautiful! how glorious were the rays that cast the wavering shadow of the branches on the rock! — was nearing the zenith before I thought of asking the lieutenant to consult his watch.

"Heavens! can you think of the time?" he exclaimed; "it is only half past twelve."

"I did not dream of staying out so!" I said. "Let us go —" A whistle on the walk diverted my attention: "And there comes Jack, — please move away three or four feet."

"Hang Jack! kiss me once, and then we *will* go."

But I was spared the pain of refusing this request by the appearance of Jack himself. As the lieutenant did not draw away from my side until the last minute, I saw that his brother detected the movement. Jack came to announce that his mother had sent to know when we expected to come home, but he had come on his own account to offer his night-key. There was an expression on his handsome face that made me wish that he were acquainted with the true state of the case, and I said to the lieutenant, in an undertone, "Tell him now, — tell him all, to-night."

George obeyed, informing his brother that he must ask for his congratulations. He was engaged to Miss Brandegee, and they were to be married as soon after to-morrow as possible. In a tone that evinced his incredulity, Jack advised that it should be to-morrow, instead of as soon after as possible. He was speedily assured of the validity of the communication, and his address to me was more cordial and kind than I could have expected one so entirely impromptu to be, — after which we retraced our steps.

It was thought best not to rouse any of the family that night to impart the intelligence. Jack kissed me good-night, and went to bed. George lingered a few minutes longer, and when we separated I considered my happiness secure.

The next morning I arose quite early, and was summoned, shortly before breakfast, to Mrs. Berkeley's presence. I remembered, as I entered the little eastern parlor, with what a rough

recommendation she had dismissed me in that very hall one year ago. But there was no time for indulgence in such reflections. I found my aunt alone. Her son had just left her; she took me by the shoulders, on my entrance, turned me to the light, and said, "Now, then, the very first question I am going to ask you is, do you love George, or not? If you marry for any other reason in the world, you are committing a piece of gross folly which you will not cease to repent every day of your life."

With a trembling voice I assured my aunt that "Love did not begin to express it," and, if the tone did not evince my sincerity, the tears which arose to my eyes must have been a sufficient witness. Mrs. Berkeley said I need not cry; she was quite convinced. A few more remarks revealed to me her discontent, seeing that the whole world would say it was brought about through her manœuvring, but Heaven knew she had nothing to do with it. She thought both George and I too young to marry; did not dream of our falling in love with each other. Probably before we had been married three years we would be tired to death of it, and both desperately in love with somebody else. In conclusion, she inquired if my intended husband was aware of my capers last summer; how I had gone out every night with Dan, Heaven knew whither, and coming back, Heaven knew when.

I said George did not know, unless Dan had told him.

"Then he does not know," said Mrs. Berkeley, "for 'kiss and tell' was no principle of Dan's, though he had few better. Of course, it is a matter that I shall say nothing about, only, as it was well around the country, somebody may tell him, and my advice to you is, to anticipate matters and tell him yourself."

In the hall I met the General, who embraced me with an affectionate warmth, quite the reverse of Aunt Judith's salutation. I then went upstairs to impart my happiness to the young ladies. Gatty was quite delighted, and expressed herself so amiably that I felt I could forgive all her former reserve toward me. Livy congratulated me with heartfelt pleasure, spoken in her tearful eyes. Hinda's only comment was, "Who could have conceived it?"

But my happiness was not without alloy. I was sorry that a duty had been laid before me by my aunt, which my own conscience had not suggested. I had wished to bury the past and forget it. It rose now like a cloud of the night before the fair face of the rising sun. I was sorry, too, that Mrs. Berkeley had advanced as an inducement to the revelation on my part, that it

might come to the lieutenant's ears through other means. To tell him would be a very painful duty, and I could not nerve myself to its discharge at once. Earnestly did I wish that my conduct during the previous summer had been more discreet. Now, for the first time, did I feel its evil consequences. Retribution, however late, is sure to come.

Having deferred the confession, I determined that it should not mar my peace for this day at least, and banished it from my mind.

Berkeley's stay was to be protracted for a week. On the Monday ensuing my engagement, while all the ladies of the family were seated on the veranda, and the lieutenant was leaning against one of the pillars, Christian came up the avenue with two letters addressed to him. Berkeley read them both, the first with a dissatisfied ejaculation. After the second was opened and a few lines had been perused, his features assumed the impassive expression, and his eye the cold, unmeaning light, which concealed his thoughts as effectually as though a visor was closed over his face. Mrs. Berkeley inquired what the trouble was. The lieutenant handed her the first letter, which was read by her with many expressions of annoyance. "Run away, has he?" she said. "And caught again."

An inquiry from Gatty led to a lucid explanation. The letter was from the overseer of the Hamilton estate. One of the negroes had ran away, and intelligence had just been received of his capture in Baltimore.

"This is the second time it has happened," said Berkeley. "He ran away once from Mr. Hamilton. I'll get a pair of rings for him."

The lieutenant was still reading the second letter. Mrs. Berkeley asked him what it was about.

"Nothing to signify," he answered, and he placed it in his pocket, his thoughts apparently engrossed by the escaped negro. "Confound these cursed niggers," he said, "they make more trouble than their black skins are worth. Here this fellow ran away two years ago — caught up near Harper's Ferry. Mr. Hamilton was going to let him off with a flogging, but I interceded, like a fool, and he went unpunished. I find this wholesale forgiving a very bad plan. Thrash the rascals all over the world, — it's the best way to deal with them. I'll have the rings on him."

"What rings?" inquired Livy.

"A suit of iron rings," said Berkeley. "One locks around

the waist, one above the knee and another below. He won't run very far with *them*, I reckon." And he reëntered the house to write a few lines to the overseer.

"It is all old Hamilton's fault," said Mrs. Berkeley. "What could he expect of a fellow who was taught to read and write? I believe he *will* get away finally. He is a bright specimen, — three-quarters white."

These words confirmed an intention which had originated during the course of the late conversation. I followed my lover into the library, where I found him tossing over the pens on the case of ink bottles, and asked to see him as soon as the letter was written, on the south piazza.

Berkeley answered that the letter would be very short, and in ten minutes joined me at the appointed place. I now made my request in behalf of the recaptured negro, and pleaded for half an hour, while the lieutenant listened in undisguised astonishment.

"My dear Mary," he said, "you talk in the strangest manner for a Southern woman! Liberate the nigger because he has run away twice!"

"But Aunt Judith says he is almost a white man!"

"That does not signify, — he is *not* a white man," replied Berkeley.

"And he knows how to read and write."

"That only proves that he has sinned against light and knowledge. My dear Mary, you do not know what you are asking. To give a man his walking-papers because he ran away, would be a very pernicious precedent to establish."

"Lieutenant Berkeley, —"

"*Do* say George."

"Well, then, *George*, will you grant the request because, and only because *I* ask it? I have set my heart on it, and your refusal will make me most unhappy."

Berkeley, quite moved by my entreaties, offered me the liberation of any other nigger on his plantation, — any one who had always behaved himself, and never tried to run away. Finding that I was firm, he promised that he would set the man free the day we should be married. "By sunrise, Mary, on the morning of our wedding," he said, "he shall go as his own master. May it prove an inducement to you to hasten the day. If you could know," he added, "what it costs me to obey your commands, you would have no doubt that I am very much in love."

Highly gratified by this concession, I now ventured another

request, which was, that he would show me the other letter. This, he at first declined to do, saying it was very far better I should not see it. I said I thought he intended to confide all his secrets to me, but the lieutenant, with a laugh, disavowed any such intention. On the contrary, there were a great many things that he had not the slightest idea of communicating to me. I felt wounded by this declaration, and after a short discussion of the topic, the lieutenant agreed to comply with my request, only desiring that, in case I should find his words verified, and should regret having seen it, in future I would be content to trust his judgment. My heart was beginning to beat with apprehension, and I asked who had written it. Berkeley answered that he did not know, as it was without signature. I opened it with trembling hands, and found my suspicions realized. It was a statement to the effect, that Miss Mary Brandegee had been looked upon as a young lady of the genus "wild," during the previous summer, together with some of the details of my indiscretions, which, read with the consciousness of his eye upon me, brought the color to my face. That the letter had originated with Hinda, I had not the slightest doubt.

"George," I said, laying my hand on his, "this is an infamous lie."

These words, uttered by the lips which were to have pronounced a full confession that very evening, seemed to produce scarcely any impression on their auditor. He folded the letter thoughtfully, first into one twist, then into another, without reply.

"There is no excuse for any lie," I continued, wondering at myself for being able to utter such a declaration. Berkeley said I need give myself no trouble on the subject. He agreed with me in the opinion, that Hinda had written the letter, and glancing at my flushed features, added a hope that in future I would be willing to spare myself annoyances of this sort by trusting his judgment.

I deemed it wise to drop the subject, but my forebodings were increased when I saw Berkeley going off through the woods with Hinda for a walk. They were absent for some time, and it was evident that on their return they were on a very amicable understanding. Hinda took me aside immediately, and with a great appearance of candor, confessed to the authorship of the anonymous letter, asking my indulgence for an act ostensibly unkind, and attributing it entirely to her love of justice and her wish that nobody should be deceived. I answered her coldly; unwilling

to express open resentment, for I felt that it might lead to something worse, which I dreaded much, not being armed with Truth. Berkeley said nothing to me regarding the interview, yet I feared, from his manner, that Hinda had done more than simply acknowledge the writing of the letter.

But the following morning I was reassured. The few hours that Berkeley spent in my company were entirely free from any unpleasant reflections, on both his part and mine, though I could not be altogether tranquil in mind. He left with Jack in the afternoon train for Washington, and I stood on the piazza watching the brothers as they retreated down the avenue, with a feeling of sadness that I would not have believed it possible I could experience so shortly after my engagement. But from these reflections I was diverted by Mrs. Berkeley, who desired to know if it were true that I had requested the lieutenant to liberate his lately captured servant. Some one had told her so, and I confirmed the intelligence, and my aunt read me a lecture half an hour long. "You can wear out a man's affection, Mary," she said, "with the utmost ease. There's my step-son Jeff, as unmanageable a brute as there is in existence, and before he was married he could never be kept within doors; yet Sidonia, without a particle of beauty, makes such good use of her common sense, that he would rather be at home now than in any other place. She is not continually asking him to do disagreeable things. And I know, that in requesting George to emancipate a runaway slave, you have asked the very favor which, of all things on earth, he was most reluctant to grant."

In the evening, when partially recovered from her displeasure, Mrs. Berkeley held a conversation with me relative to my marriage, which, for some reason, she was anxious should take place very soon. The arrangements were speedily made. It had been my aunt's original intention to return to town by the first of November, but the time was changed to the beginning of the month following, and I was to be married near the close. I earnestly wished to defer the wedding till the spring, but Mrs. Berkeley informed me that if I were so foolish, it might be postponed forever. I looked forward, therefore, to the close of the next September, with the anticipation that it would find me the wife of George Berkeley.

In spite of my comparative isolation, in spite of the memory of the deception of which I had been guilty, and of the absence of my lover, that month was a very happy one for me. Mrs. Berkeley and Gatty seemed to look upon me in a new light. I

rode with them frequently, sat with them almost altogether, and a strong attachment for them both sprang up in my heart. So much was I swayed by my new prejudices, that I found myself adopting all my Aunt Judith's maxims and doctrines. I agreed with all her opinions, coincided with all her judgments, however erroneous, endorsed all her actions, however unjust, and tenfold increased was my admiration for her strength of character, now that I was not unpleasantly affected thereby.

We were all in New York by the first of September. Berkeley was expected in town about the middle of the month, a fortnight previous to the wedding. The time intervening was with me a busy season. Mrs. Berkeley was the principal adviser in all my arrangements, which were quite extensive, and I shortly perceived that my expenses could not be met, or even partially covered, by what was remaining of that year's income. I could not acquaint Mrs. Berkeley with the fact, as she would demand what had become of all my money; or, should she assist me, I knew it would soon be a topic of conversation through the family.

One morning, while engaged with some accounts of a distressing nature, I was interrupted by a visit from Fanny Douglas, one of the bridesmaids elect. She was annoyed and troubled. The other bridesmaids had their heads full of veils! — they said it was the fashion now, — and it was very horrid and shocking. She knew it could be the fashion among a very low set of people only. As she perceived from my abstraction that I was in a dilemma, she inquired what possible trouble could be the lot of a woman who was soon to be the wife of George Berkeley. I informed her that my only trouble at present lay in the fact that I was entirely out of money, — could not see how I was to buy my wedding-dress, and I asked her advice in the emergency.

"Gracious, Miss Brandegee!" she exclaimed, "how can any one situated as you are be at a loss? I'd borrow. I'd ask Mrs. Berkeley, or the General, or Judge Ostrander, — curtail my list of new dresses, — give some man a little money and let him speculate for me in stocks. Louis Ostrander says there'll be some up shortly ten per cent. Why, there are a thousand ways."

I expressed my objections to the plans just proposed, by saying that I disliked to borrow, that I could not possibly make the number of my dresses any smaller, and having no money for clothes, I certainly had none to invest in stocks. Fanny suggested to me to borrow ten thousand dollars, and send Mr. Hervey, who was doing nothing down stairs, to Wall street to buy as many shares as possible of the designated stock, which, though below par on

that day, was certainly going up ten per cent. very soon. It was worth at present eleven cents a share, and Louis Ostrander had said that when some criminal was hung he should expect that stock to go up ten per cent., and the criminal would receive sentence in a day or two. She had paid particular attention, as she had thought of buying a little herself.

I replied, that even if my knowledge of stock operations were more extensive, such a proceeding could not be thought of, seeing that I could not borrow such an amount at once, and that I disliked Mr. Hervey too much to make him my envoy.

"Then I don't see what you are to do, except to tell Mr. Berkeley that, for reasons best known to yourself, you cannot marry him," said Fanny.

I made no answer, still merged in despondency, while Fanny sauntered about the room, deploring the absurd taste of women who could admire veils for bridesmaids. I informed her, at last, that I had not the slightest intention that any young lady in my bridal party should wear a veil except myself, that was, if she could suggest to me how to pay for it. As I pulled open a drawer, to look for the receipt of a bill which Jarvis had brought in for second payment, Fanny exclaimed:

"Why, look at all these diamonds and bracelets! And you are asking me how you can buy a veil! Haven't you thought of the Jews?"

"I cannot think of selling these trinkets," I said, after a momentary pause of astonishment. They are chiefly presents from my father."

"Not *sell* them, my dear," returned Fanny; "I didn't say sell! The Jews will loan money on them quite extensively."

I waited to dismiss Jarvis before proceeding on this topic. At first I felt that I could not harbor the idea, but, on reflection, it seemed less disagreeable than that of borrowing from any acquaintance. Fanny cited so many examples among women of fashion, according to her certain knowledge, that all my scruples were finally banished. Judge Ostrander's carriage being at the door, Miss Douglas and I rode down together to a pawnbroker's shop in Broadway.

We were shown into a little backroom, where we were soon joined by the pawnbroker. The negotiation was speedily concluded, he agreeing to hold the jewels in trust for half their value, at a usurious rate of interest, which would, I felt, be quite indifferent to me when I should have the means of paying. The business thus decided, some tickets were produced, and my name

was requested. I was on the point of giving my own, when a sign from Fanny checked me. There was not a minute to hesitate. The only name that occurred to me was that under which Hinda had formerly corresponded with Ramsay Jones. I said, "Laura Ashton." I regretted it the next moment, but since it could not be helped, I dismissed it from my thoughts.

When once more in the carriage I reconsidered the circumstances, and was forced to the conclusion that considerable as was the assistance afforded me by my late move, it still was not adequate to the necessities of the case. I appealed again to my companion.

"This is all very well, Fanny, as far as it goes," I said. "But there is not half enough, and I have no more jewels to pawn."

Fanny suggested an alternative. She assured me that she should lose no time in pressing me to avail myself of it, but would simply make the proposal. There was a Jew, a wealthy jeweller, in the vicinity, who would lend me money on my promissory note, at a high rate of interest; but that, as the promise to pay more than the per centage fixed by law was not obligatory, the Jew would require evidence of my respectability, which she was ready to afford by accompanying me to the shop, and by introducing me as a member of her own social circle. The method proposed I thought safe and feasible enough. Fanny regarded my scruples as squeamish, assuring me that many ladies thought nothing about it at all. She had been instrumental in relieving many friends of embarrassment by taking them to this Jew, who was as rich as Crœsus.

Deciding that it was just as bad to need half a sum as the whole of it, I accepted the proposition. The horses drew up before the door of the jeweller's shop with a readiness that argued some acquaintance with the place. Fanny led the way directly into the "office," as it was called, wherein sat an old man, bowed down with the weight of years, and exhibiting in his physiognomy, unmistakable traces of his Israelitish origin. Fanny soon made known her errand. She stated that I was betrothed to a Southerner who owned a large estate in Virginia, that I was to be married within a month, and that I wanted a loan of a few hundred dollars, which he would be happy to give me immediately.

The Jew grinned, — scanned my features, — and sententiously remarked, "Not twenty-one!"

Fanny insisted that I was, making a signal to me to be quiet. "Come, Shylock, draw your cheque," she added, pushing some

paper toward him. "We want the money right away. I'll be security."

The cheque for the amount which I had named was written, after which the Jew drew up a note, by which I acknowledged myself his debtor, promising to discharge the obligation one month after my wedding-day. I disliked the phraseology of the note, but signed my name recklessly. The note was witnessed by a clerk called in from the store.

During the fortnight ensuing, I had opportunity for reflection on my past conduct, and my present proper course. The wedding-day was fixed, and I suffered no little compunction at the thought that George Berkeley still retained so false an impression regarding the facts stated in the anonymous letter which he had reluctantly submitted to my inspection. I determined, therefore, to undeceive him at any cost, and looked forward with anxiety to the night of his return.

It was on the evening of the Thursday, two weeks previous to the day appointed for the wedding, that the lieutenant arrived. He came as late as nine o'clock, and when the rest of the family had retired from the parlor, I improved the occasion. I said that I had a confession to make, and prefaced it by closing all the doors, looking behind the curtains, and, by my agitated manner, conveying the impression that it was of importance, while the lieutenant sat watching my movements with an air of amusement. I came, at last, to his side, and, yielding my trembling hand to his, said that I was about to tell him something which would alienate him from me, and cause him to hate and despise me forever.

"Answer me one thing," said Berkeley. "You still intend to marry me this day fortnight?" I said I did. The lieutenant replied that that was all he desired to know, but if there was any thing else I cared to tell him, I would find that the alienation, hatred, and so on, existed nowhere but in my own fancy.

In positive anguish, I threw myself into his arms, buried my face on his shoulder, and, in tones which I strove vainly to command, I told him that he had been deceived; he trusted and loved me when I was not worthy; I had told him a falsehood; the anonymous letter which he had received in Virginia contained no slander; it was all true. Every act of indiscretion and folly therein attributed to me I had committed.

When this confession was uttered, I scarcely dared to breathe. Berkeley preserved a silence which I could only interpret by contempt, and the bitter waters of anguish had swollen high

around my heart, when I was reassured by the pressure of his lips on my temples. As I lifted my head and saw that his splendid eyes shone on mine with their expression still unaltered, the suspense thus ended, found ready relief in a flood of tears.

"This is all, I presume," queried Berkeley. I bowed my assent. "And the murder is out." I signified that it was. "I can tell you, then," continued Berkeley, "that it is nothing new. I knew there was some truth in the statements when they were made."

Surprised by this, I asked an explanation which Berkeley gave, by stating that during the previous winter in New York, he had heard some rumor of the kind, had questioned Jack on the subject, and had been informed by his brother, who had spoken quite impartially. He had not been blinded by my indignant denial.

I was overwhelmed with confusion at this, and it cost my lover every assurance at his command to restore my equanimity. The matter was settled at last, with a promise on my part never to attempt to deceive him again, and a promise on his to trust me under all circumstances.

The next evening there was to be company. A small number of the guests had been invited to dinner. Beside the members of the family, the party at the table was made up of old Mrs. Chauncey, Eleanor Ostrander, her cousin, Fanny Douglas, and Lionel Hervey.

The conversation related for some time to the merits of a new dramatic reading, held recently at Irving Hall, — then to the defects in a new translation of the Iliad, whence it descended to the latest fashion in ladies' cloaks, which everybody pronounced horrid. Afterward, it strayed to the coming election, where it seemed likely to stay for the rest of the evening, but as the fruit and wine were brought on there was a diversion. I had noticed that Hinda's eyes had been sparkling all the evening with an unnatural light. She was evidently laboring under some excitement, the cause of which was manifested soon. During the lull in the conversation, she remarked to me across the table, in a tone of voice that was painfully distinct:

"What do you think I heard about you to-day, Mary? The strangest thing! Nothing other than that you put all your diamonds in pledge for money to purchase your wedding clothes! Did you ever hear any thing so preposterous! I just happened to think of it, because I noticed that you are not wearing any ornaments to-night."

I felt that I was turning scarlet. I strove to smile and answer lightly; but the smile would not be forced, and I stammered so that my words were unintelligible.

"Don't get excited, Mary," said Mrs. Berkeley, noticing my agitation. "If I had heeded every thing that has been said about me, I should have lived in a tempest all my life. Such a silly story must fall through. I am not surprised, though, at its occurring to Hinda. I never saw you so entirely an example of 'beauty unadorned.'"

"It has been so for every day this week," Hinda persisted.

"You seem to think my trinkets *are* at the pawnbroker's, Miss Wriothesley!" I said, with some heat. "Thank heaven, I am not reduced to such a strait; if I were, I might be ready to suspect others of the same."

I was shocked at myself, the moment that this angry declaration was uttered; but the idea of revealing to the whole company the truth of the surmise, was so inexpressibly galling, that in a few moments all remorse was banished.

"I suppose if you were 'reduced,'" said Hinda "you would not wish it published at this table," adding, by way of explanation to Miss Ostrander, "Mary is as proud as Lucifer."

"I have too much self-respect," I replied, "either to visit pawnbrokers, or to be subjected to the imputation." I was about to rise, but meeting the calm reproof in George Berkeley's eye, I kept my seat and strove to retain my self-command. Before this task was at all accomplished, Jarvis walked in with an envelope directed to Laura Ashton, which, after a momentary hesitation, he placed before me, remarking that he had found it on the stairs.

The address was in full view of the lynx-eyed Mrs. Chauncey and of Gatty Berkeley. I turned deadly pale, and trembling in every nerve with indignation, I exclaimed: "Why have you brought this to *me*, Jarvis? Laura Ashton is not my name. Miss Wriothesley, this belongs to you!" And I threw it across the table to Hinda.

"I can't claim any acquaintance with it," said Hinda, in a laughing tone, "but as you say it is mine, I'll indulge my woman's curiosity, and see what it is about." She opened the letter immediately. "Pawnbroker's tickets, as I am a Christian!" she cried, and she displayed half a dozen of the proscribed pledges on the table. "You seemed to insinuate, Miss Brandegee, that the name belongs to me, and I was too polite to contradict you; but I must decline the honor of owning these tickets?"

On the first appearance of the tickets, Fanny Douglas had cast at me a glance of astonishment; but I read the scheme too well to join in any sentiment akin to surprise. I perceived that Jarvis was acting at Hinda's instigation. I *knew* I had not lost the tickets, — I felt that they had been stolen from my drawer. I remembered that Jarvis was in my room for a few moments, on the day when Fanny had proposed a visit to the money-lenders, and how much he had heard afterward, I could not decide. I believed all this firmly; but, simultaneous with the conviction, was the consciousness that I could not prove it, and that an attempt to expose her malice, could only result in shame to myself. I could only sit in silence, while Hinda held forth on the subject of the iniquitous tickets, declaring that she could not conceive where they came from, whose they could be, or how Mary *could* have supposed them hers.

"Am I to understand," said George Berkeley, "that the tickets are not yours, Miss Hinda?" Hinda declared she had never had any such thing in her life. "Any one present claim them?" continued Berkeley. No one replied. The lieutenant gathering up the tickets thrust them into his pocket, and Eleanor Ostrander, with her usual politeness, immediately turned the conversation.

I was absolutely wretched. Oh, if it were only Hinda's fault instead of mine for which I suffered, as was formerly the case! Low-spirited and absent-minded, I did not feel equal to speaking to a soul, and that evening the parlors were crowded. Of course, I could expect no attention from George, since our engagement was publicly known, but it chagrined me deeply to perceive that he devoted himself exclusively to Hinda. I longed for the company to go, that I might discover what would be his manner to me. Just as the rooms were beginning to thin out, Lionel Hervey came up to take his farewell of Mrs. Berkeley. I was standing by her side. Mrs. Berkeley asked what his address would be in a week. Hervey said that he did not know. "If you don't get your cards," she answered, "it will be your own fault entirely. I shall do my best to forward them."

"We shall expect to see you here a week from Thursday, Mr. Hervey," I added. The young gentleman bowed a cold acknowledgment, and took his departure, while I, inwardly, pronounced him very unamiable. I did not see him again until — no matter when — I must not anticipate.

After the departure of the company, I went back to the dining-room where Gatty was pouring out coffee for Livy and Hinda.

Feeling much depressed, I took a seat near Mrs. Berkeley, and, as an explanation of the ill-humor on which Livy commented, I said that Lionel Hervey had made himself quite disagreeable.

"He's a fine fellow, say what you will," Hinda replied, with decision.

"I know," added Livy, "that he thinks you are throwing yourself away. I saw his eye dwell on you with such a look, Mary! just as he was going, — as one might regard a lamb led to the slaughter."

The progress of these remarks were interrupted by the appearance of Lieutenant Berkeley, who, coming to the threshold, asked to see me for a moment. I joined him in the hall. He said that a telegraphic despatch just received would take him up the river early the next day; as he might not see me in the morning, he merely wished to inquire whether the tickets belonging to a certain mythical damsel named Laura Ashton, were mine.

I said the name was not mine. The lieutenant replied that he knew my name was Brandegee — would shortly be Berkeley — and inquired again if the tickets were mine.

I acknowledged the ownership of the tickets, and as Berkeley handed them to me, I said, with some bitterness, that I supposed he had not thought me capable of a thing like this.

Berkeley replied that there was no answering for a woman's capabilities. Where the female sex was concerned, he wondered at nothing. I inquired if my conduct had displeased him. Berkeley answered that it was no affair of his. He was not married to me yet.

Wounded by the manner, rather than the matter of this speech, I turned back to the parlor. Mrs. Berkeley hoped I was not going to sit up any later; it was after twelve. I said, "Certainly not." The lieutenant appeared surprised by my answer, and reminded me that he was going away the next morning, and might not return till the day after.

I answered coldly, that the term of his stay was nothing to me. When the family separated, I addressed no "Good-night" to him, but on leaving the room passed him without a look.

When above stairs, my conscience smote me. I regretted having spoken to him so coldly, but then I determined to see him early in the morning and make amends. Livy, to whom I imparted my troubles, encouraged me in the resolution. But I found, the next morning, that Berkeley had gone by the first train, and his mother could not tell when he would return.

Determined to free myself from the disagreeable incumbrance of the pawn tickets, I called at Judge Ostrander's office in the course of the day, and borrowed of him a sum of money equal to the amount of my debts. My jewels were redeemed without difficulty, and I had the satisfaction of sporting a few for Hinda's benefit in the evening; but on going to the other place, I found no little trouble in gaining admittance, as the shop was closed. At first, I attributed this to the fact that it was Saturday. But having effected an entrance through the rear of an adjoining building, I was informed, to my great annoyance, that the Jew had been drowned only the day before, — had left a widow and seventeen children, — and there being a great deal of trouble with the property, no notes could be redeemed or even found, without a conference with the lawyers.

I came away in some anxiety of mind, and stayed up late in the evening awaiting Berkeley, intending to tell him about the matter, give him the money and request him to redeem the note, — but he did not come.

It was a dreary Sunday. I came home from church in the earnest hope that I should find Berkeley, as it was possible that he had returned to the city late the night before. But there was no sign of him during the day.

The next morning, whilst I was in Livy's apartment confiding to her the tribulation of my soul, Hinda came running in with an air of delighted exultation.

"Don't speak to me, girls, — I am going to ride with Lieutenant Berkeley."

"Lieutenant Berkeley! has he come?" I cried.

"Yes; he came in the morning express from Albany. He made an appointment last Friday night to ride with me to-day, and he is at breakfast now in the dining-room. Isn't it splendid? such a beautiful day! But I see he has that Dan at the door, and I'm so afraid my neck will be broken."

I had risen to run down stairs immediately, but on these words an overpowering resentment repressed me. Without a word, I went to the window and gazed down into the street. There stood Dan, resplendent in harness, his black coat shining like a piece of polished ware, and the aspect of his gleaming eyes and snorting nostrils I should have judged sufficient to intimidate any woman with less than life and death at stake. Hinda hurriedly prosecuted her arrangements. She was sure that not another lady in the park would have such a handsome young officer as her gallant, — the worst of it was that unmanageable horse! It was positively like a risk!

"Mrs. Preston will be on the park this morning," said Livy. "She said so yesterday."

"Mrs. Preston!" cried Hinda. "Oh, horrors! what if Jones should be with her? She would do her best to exasperate him. She has never forgiven me for my flirtation with old Preston. These wives are the devil!"

"And you will find, Hinda," I said, turning towards her, "that a woman engaged is quite as bad, if she is provoked too far!"

"Why, Mary, *you're* not jealous, I hope. That's intensely silly. I shall tell the lieutenant."

She left the room with these words. Livy now advised me strenuously to go down stairs and welcome Berkeley's return; to apologize to him for my rudeness on the past Friday evening; exhibit no jealousy whatever in the affair of the drive with Hinda, but see her off with my best wishes. "You may rely on it, Mary," she said, "he will come back ten times more deeply in love with you than he was before. Hinda asked him to take her, I heard her myself, last Friday evening."

But to Livy's suggestion I would not hearken. To go out riding with Miss Wriothesley when I had quarrelled with him, — to come home from Albany after a two days' absence, and drive a mad horse around the park at her request before he had seen me, was unlover-like conduct, which demanded no concessions on my part. I saw him put Hinda into the vehicle, watched them away, and devoutly hoped that her fears regarding the safety of her neck might be realized.

Hinda was not at home till late in the afternoon. Whether she had been riding all that time with Berkeley or not, I did not ask her. I saw, with a bitter pang, that she looked extremely beautiful, and her personal advantages were heightened by her most becoming attire. The lieutenant did not come in till the evening. I spoke to him with a coldness which I could not conquer, and he sat down to chess with Hinda. The game was not ended until eleven o'clock. I supposed then that he would desire me to remain below after the rest, and ask me to entertain him a short time, but no, he said that he had a devilish headache, and was going to bed.

"Heavens!" I thought, in consternation, "can all this come of the pawn-tickets, or is he falling in love with Hinda?"

The headache lasted all the next morning — that is, I suppose it did — as he did not come down till after eleven, when he departed the mansion, having asked Jack for his night-key, — a sure sign that he was not coming in till late.

Well, I did not know what was to be done. I was in a terrible dilemma.' To say a word to Mrs. Berkeley would have been the ruin of all. Neither that plan would answer, nor any other. The seamstresses, sewing on my bridal dresses, supposed me to be the happiest maiden in the city, as I judged by a sentence which I caught in passing the open door of my aunt's apartment. How wrongly half the world reads the other half!

Hinda was out in the afternoon, and came in when we were all at dinner. George not being at home, the course of her loquacity flowed unchecked. Perhaps the wine, of which she partook rather freely, aided in producing the effect, but, however brought about, the fact was, that the fair Mrs. Wriothesley became quite communicative. She divulged, without hesitation, that she had been to see a dealer in the black art in Greenwich street.

Mrs. Berkeley laughed, and encouraged Hinda's revelations, which were quite extensive. Her fortune had been told, and she was to be married within six months, and nothing prevented her being married before, except the entire impossibility of the thing. Mrs. Berkeley said she thought that was quite sufficient prevention. Hinda proceeded to say, that she had asked the fortune-teller whether the gentleman was married at present, in which case the death of his wife before the half year was out must transpire. The question was a puzzling one, but after some time the obscure oracle was suddenly revealed. Hinda's promised husband was a handsome young Southerner, an officer in the army, quite wealthy, and what was more, he was on the eve of marriage with another lady. "I protest," she continued, "it is a very singular coincidence."

"I did not suppose that all the fools were dead," remarked Mrs. Berkeley, "but that a person of sense should consult a witch, in the present age, surprises me."

"Oh, I don't believe a word she said," replied Hinda, "but I shall try a better one next time. Next time I shall go to a regular clairvoyant."

"You had better go to head-quarters, — try the devil himself, — then you will be sure of valid information," observed Jack.

"I suppose," rejoined Mrs. Berkeley, "that Hinda is so sure of seeing him finally, that she does not care to anticipate matters."

This remark, like every other of the same nature frequently on Mrs. Berkeley's lips, sent a cold chill through my veins. But I had also another source of alarm in Hinda's revelation. That

she had pointed the prophecy herself, I was fully certain, and, though without the slightest idea that any modern sybil had power to read the future, I saw very clearly what were Hinda's intentions. Of George Berkeley's constancy I had no positive distrust, yet we were now at variance, and I felt that my own conduct under the circumstances had not been so exemplary as to excite either his respect or admiration. I could not deny that Hinda's charms, both of person and manners, were far superior to mine, and I had seen them exerted the previous evening in their full power.

That evening, several gentlemen from Virginia, among whom was the son of General Berkeley's neighbor, Mr. Tyler, came up from a down-town hotel with Lieutenant Berkeley. The conversation dwelling chiefly on affairs in Dixie, runaway negroes speedily became the subject of discussion. The capture of Berkeley's slave who had escaped from the Hamilton estate, in whose behalf I had formerly interceded with my lover, was next spoken of, and Mrs. Berkeley alluded in terms of recommendation to the punishment to which he had been sentenced. It would serve as a continual reminder.

"I thought you promised to free him," I said, in a low tone to the lieutenant, who made one of the group to which I belonged at the moment.

Berkeley replied that he had not promised not to punish him, nor did he intend to. And, as our glasses were filled the moment after, he added: "Here's to the improvement of your principles."

I could have made a severe retort, but, as Berkeley was called out of the room, was deprived of the opportunity. Nor were my unpleasing reflections diminished, when a message from him gave me an intimation that he would like to see me in the hall.

I came out with dismal forebodings. A shabby looking individual, whom I remembered to have seen in the capacity of a clerk, stood near the front door in conference with Berkeley, which ceased as I approached.

"You seem to have gone into the Jews by the wholesale," remarked the lieutenant, handing me the note which I had signed in the jeweller's shop and was indorsed by Fanny Douglas, while the messenger, with a profusion of bows, desired to know if he had the honor of standing in the presence of Miss Brandejee.

I corrected his pronunciation. The intelligent youth proceeded to say, that he inquired because he supposed it possible that the said young lady had changed her name.

I said she had not, and was tempted to add that she never might. The young man, who appeared desirous of emulating a Chinese mandarin in the number and frequency of his salutations, went on to declare, that he had come openly to treat of the matter. He adopted no underhand dealings, nor would he insult the lady by assuming that she wished it. He had not been *brought up* in a Jew's shop!

"Judging from the phraseology of this note," said Berkeley, "I should not suppose that your master had been brought up in a lawyer's shop. This note is payable one month from the date of the young lady's marriage, to say nothing of the twenty per cent. Suppose she did not marry at all, how did he expect to obtain the money?"

With another profound obeisance, the youth replied that he did not know.

"Signed by one person under age, and indorsed by another," Berkeley continued. "I hope, for the sake of his seventeen orphans, that he did not hold many notes drawn in this style. His head was probably turned on this occasion, — I cannot wonder."

The messenger again remarked, that he had only come to inquire whether the young lady was married, not to trouble her with the note.

"No matter," said Berkeley, "we will redeem it now. Call your witness in," and he took out his pocket-book.

I had stood throughout this discussion with my head bowed in the most severe mortification. But at this movement on the part of Berkeley, I came forward, took the note from his hand, and informed him, in a low, determined tone, that if he paid one penny of it, I should hate him. I hurried up the staircase, gathered together the remainder of the money borrowed from General Ostrander and kept for this emergency, — though when the amount was made up there was scarcely any thing left, — came back again, and counted out the bills in Berkeley's presence. He had wounded me deeply by his comments, as it had never been my intention to touch any of his money in the payment of debts contracted before my marriage. My displeasure was evinced sufficiently in my behavior, as I did not look at him again during the evening.

The following morning a warm dispute, originating in some trifle, was carried on far more than an hour between Hinda and I. The advantage was on her side entirely, as she maintained a perfectly good-humored style of attack, and I lost my temper

to such an extent, that I suffered from the ill effects of it all day. My determination was taken, to fathom her designs to their furthest depth. I ordered the carriage in the afternoon for a solitary ride; and I went, like an absurd, insensate, double-dyed fool, to the house of the woman in Greenwich street, whom Hinda had consulted.

I ordered the carriage to wait around the corner. On asking to see the mistress of the house, I was shown, by the squeaking-voiced boy who admitted me, into a little parlor, neatly though scantily furnished. I did not wait long before the opening of the door, by which I had entered, aroused me from reflections that were far from pleasant. On looking up I beheld a woman about twenty-six years of age, so surpassingly beautiful, both in face and figure, that my astonishment at first almost conquered my self-command. The recollection of my errand soon recalled me to myself; and, as the professed fortune-teller had at once seated herself in a business-like manner, without any of the high-flown or tragedy airs which I had been led to expect, I lost no time in the revelation of my wishes. I gave her the last five-dollar note that I had in the world, informing her that I had not come to see her professionally, but simply to ascertain the particulars of an interview which she had held with a young lady on the previous day.

The information was given far more readily than I had anticipated. A young lady, extremely pretty, with an interesting manner, had visited the house to discover whether the good-fortune which she hoped to realize was in store for her eventually. She said that she had lately fallen in love with a young officer in the army, a Virginian by birth, and of a very engaging exterior. He had been recently engaged, and was very shortly to be married to a lady who was young, pretty, and intelligent, and who, in the course of a year or two, would come into possession of quite a large property. Here my informant looked at me keenly, and my agitation was so great that I could scarcely command my voice so far as to ask her to proceed.

"The young lady," she continued, "was anxious to know whether the match might not be broken off, but, to the inquiry regarding the prospect of such an event, she replied that she feared it would be a matter of difficulty. She said that the young gentleman's lady-love was of a very watchful and jealous disposition, strongly attached to her lover, and by no means likely to look on any revolution in her prospects with toleration. At the same time, judging from the gentleman's manner toward her-

self, she was sure she might win his affections if she only had the time and opportunity. Both time and opportunity she thought might be afforded if she could bring about a postponement of the match. She alleged that the gentleman was quite wealthy, owned a handsome Southern property entirely his own, apart from the chance of an almost impossible contingency. She owned that, being poor, it was an object with her to marry well, — in fact, it was what she had been trying to do for the past two or three years, and was determined on success in the present instance."

I recognized Hinda in all this. Without asking my informant what encouragement she had given her applicant, I felt strong apprehensions creeping over me, well knowing Hinda's unscrupulousness when she had an object in view, and her determination in the pursuit of it. The pangs of a fearful jealousy came over me. Never in my life before had I suffered such intensity of mental anguish. The thought of losing Berkeley was agony insupportable, and I knew that the danger was imminent. Hinda herself had acknowledged that her hopes rested in the postponement of the match. I asked how she expected to bring about that postponement, now that the very day was fixed. The answer was, as I had feared, that I had written a letter to some gentleman of impaired reputation. I saw that she might, indeed, make a use of it fatal to my happiness. Lieutenant Berkeley never had known the name under which she corresponded formerly with Jones. That letter might, therefore, be used as she chose, and how could I expect that my protestations would avail, when Berkeley was well aware that I had been guilty of one falsehood? and the circumstance of the name which had been on the pawn-broker's ticket would be overwhelming corroboration.

I turned deadly pale, — I felt my brain swimming. My companion took off my bonnet, and, having forced me to lie down on her sofa, went to bring a glass of water. I could swallow but little; and while I lay with my head supported on the cushion, she took a seat beside me, and, as though to turn the subject, began to enlarge on the virtues of her magic powders, love potions, and other nostrums.

I lay looking at her intently, and the thought struck me that I had seen her before. The idea which flashed thus across my mind was confirmed on a longer scrutiny. I was more and more sure of her identity, until I could retain no doubt that I had recognized her. She must have seen it in my look, for she suddenly cut short her disquisition to say, in a changed tone and with an altered manner:

"My dear, do you know me?"

"Yes," I replied, "you are Mrs. Brancton."

She rose, looked into the adjoining apartment and the hall, then, having locked both doors, she returned to my side.

Mrs. Brancton's character I had too often heard denounced in no measured terms to feel entirely easy under the sense of my present situation; but the conflicting emotions of jealousy and curiosity soon banished every other feeling, and prompted me to listen with eagerness to the recital which was now unreservedly given me.

She informed me, in the first place, that her divorce case was soon to be before the courts. This time it was not, as on the two former occasions, Mr. Brancton's suit, but hers. She had come to town to remain until it was decided, and, finding it expedient to be for a few days *incognito*, she had come to the house of the fortune-teller, who had formerly lived as French governess to her younger sisters in her mother's family. On the day previous to this, she had secreted herself in the room to beguile a few hours in amusement derived from those revelations made to the gipsey, and her prophecies. Hinda was there, among the rest, and Mrs. Brancton had thus been the invisible auditress of her communication. As this day the gipsey had gone out of town, her beautiful guest offered to take her place, feeling satisfied that she knew the jargon sufficiently well, and could adapt the stories skilfully. She had thus amused herself for the whole day up to this time, and, so soon as informed of the nature of my errand, determined at once to acquaint me with Hinda's designs, which had inspired her with strong, though until now only transitory, indignation; but, having taken an immense fancy to me, she felt deep interest in baffling the plans aimed at my happiness.

I now told her, since I had discovered that she was a lady of position, or, rather, what was formerly such, and must, therefore, be a person of honor, Hinda's name, my own, and that of my intended husband. At mention of the last a sudden gleam shot over her highly expressive and exquisitely beautiful features, which led me to inquire if she knew Mr. George Berkeley.

"Not personally," she answered. "I knew an elder brother of his formerly — Mr. Dan Berkeley — very well indeed."

I was already aware of that, but not caring to expatiate on the fact, I dismissed the subject by remarking that I also had known him very well. I then proceeded to speak of the letter which Hinda seemed to consider such an argument in her favor, and informed Mrs. Brancton of the circumstances under which it was

written; also, that the gentleman who now had possession of it was Mr. Ramsay Jones.

Mrs. Brancton evinced no small surprise, remarked that Ram. Jones appeared to be mixed up with every thing, then asked if I knew the name under which Miss Wriothesley had corresponded with him. I said it was Laura Ashton. Mrs. Brancton at once declared that the name was quite familiar to her; she had discovered Jones to be carrying on that flirtation. She knew that by this time he was thoroughly estranged from Miss Wriothesley, and she did not believe Hinda would be able to obtain the letter. I said even if she should, I might appeal to Mr. Jones to support my statement. Mrs. Brancton said that Mr. Jones was then in Georgia; that if Miss Wriothesley had not the letter, it would take her two weeks to obtain it; if she had it, and made immediate use of it, it would be two weeks before my appeal to Mr. Jones could be made and responded to. Mrs. Brancton was not of opinion that Hinda had the letter. She rather judged that the young lady's principal weapon lay in the exercise of her seductive blandishments.

In deep tribulation, I asked what she would advise me to do.

"I know what *I* would do," she answered, "but you are not of my calibre, and would not dare."

"Not dare!" I repeated. "You do not know, Mrs. Brancton, to what a pitch of desperation I am wrought. It is only now that I begin to understand all which an outraged woman *can* dare."

"You love him so much?" she exclaimed.

I answered by a look which was evidently eloquent enough.

"Well, if he is at all like his brother Dan, I cannot blame you," she answered. She then proceeded, in the height of her cool deviltry, to unfold to me her plan. As she judged the case to be, Mr. George Berkeley experienced a mere fleeting fancy for Miss Wriothesley, which, fostered by her wiles and fascinations, might eventually ripen into something more. At this juncture, it evidently required her utmost art to keep the balance even. Should she be led to the commission of any folly, should she reveal to him the extent to which her own feelings were implicated, should she evince her partiality for him in any obtrusive manner, such an act of indiscretion could not fail to disgust Berkeley with her forever, and, as a natural reaction, his allegiance to me would be restored. I agreed in this fully. I thought that such would, undoubtedly, be the result.

Mrs. Brancton now recommended to me one of the gipsey's love-powders, of which she had previously spoken.

"Am I to give it to Berkeley, or take it myself?" I asked.

Mrs. Brancton's smile at my simplicity led me to ignore my question before it had been fairly asked, and, as there was no room for further mistake, I said that I supposed she meant it should be given to Hinda.

"Certainly," Mrs. Brancton answered.

I sat and pondered the idea.

"Is there any doubt as to its effect?" I inquired; "for I risk too much in the chance of detection to do it for any but a certain result."

"You may rely on it," replied Mrs. Brancton. "It will make her perfectly ridiculous. I cannot answer for the folly that she may commit, and you know, or ought to know, what the effect will be on his mind, since she is evidently a woman for whom, at present, he can have no serious prepossession. A man will excuse almost every thing in a woman that he loves, but when he is not in love, he can see things clearly as they are. I am not advertising any gipsey's quackery, as there is no need to tell you, but I have witnessed the effects of the potion too often to entertain any doubt whatever. The effect is akin to that of laughing-gas. She may ask Berkeley to marry her. There can be no calculation on what she will do."

My mind was fully made up; nevertheless, I asked if she would do such a thing herself.

"My dear, I *have* done it," was the short but emphatic reply.

"And the effect?"

"Was always what I desired."

"Can you let me have it to-day?"

"You will be obliged to come or send when the gipsey is at home. But, Miss Brandegee, the execution of this project requires a great deal of nerve."

"I am equal to it," I answered. I asked the price of the powder. It would be but a few shillings. I said that I would come the next day. Before leaving, I showed Mrs Brancton the little picture which had formerly belonged to the Countess de Castro. Mrs. Brancton pronounced the lieutenant "bewitchingly handsome," discovered in it a strong likeness to Dan, and assured me of her earnest wishes for my success in defeating the plans of my rival.

I hurried away from the house. In considering the matter that afternoon, I partially relented, and, at last, had just made up my mind to let the powder alone and pursue my proper course with all the dignity of rectitude, when Miss Bourdléme called to

see the young ladies. Livy was sick, Gatty was dressing for dinner, Hinda and Bessie were out; therefore nobody saw Miss Bourdléme but I. She did not stay many minutes, as it was growing late, and, on going away, she observed, with a laugh: "I advise you to look after your lover, my dear, I met him for the third time to-day in Broadway with Miss Wriothesley."

"I can trust him," said I, with a smile forced to cover the sudden pang her words caused in my heart.

"Well, it's adorable, — such confidence! I do hope when I am engaged I shall manifest the same trusting disposition."

We exchanged a few parting compliments, I not losing my self-command in the slightest degree, and I went out with her upon the steps. As she stopped to say a few last words regarding the arrangements for the next evening's ball, Hinda and Lieutenant Berkeley came together down the sidewalk. They were certainly a splendid couple. Miss Bourdléme met them at the foot of the steps. They held a very short conversation, then Virginia went on.

"Sister Anne on the watch-tower!" said Hinda, as they came up the stone steps. I made no answer, and entered with them. Hinda said she had not attracted so much attention on Broadway in an age, owing, of course, to her handsome companion. Everybody admired them.

"They only saw the exterior," I remarked.

"Is that little piece of wit severe intended for Lieutenant Berkeley, or for me?" asked Hinda.

"Both," I answered.

Both seemed to appreciate it, for Hinda went upstairs directly, and Berkeley walked through the hall into the dining-room to meet his mother.

Mrs. Berkeley occupied all dinner-time in wondering what Miss Bourdléme could mean by supposing that she intended to chaperone a party in full dress to a public ball on the following evening. She thought a ball so entirely out of season a very silly affair; her furthest intention was to sit in a box and look on for a couple of hours, but as all the young ladies under her care, excepting Hinda, were in deep mourning, of course they would not go down to partake in the festivities. She would not think of going at all were it not that she was under obligations to two of the managers, and the ball was a charitable affair.

Lieutenant Berkeley said that he did not care to go, — it would be such a terrible bore. Jack was engaged at an astronomical club, and could not go. Hinda said no ticket need be bought for

her, as she should stay at home. In vain Mrs. Berkeley argued the point with her sons. The lieutenant's reply was "any thing in the world, mother, to oblige you but this." Jack said he could not possibly be home till ten o'clock, and knew he could not dress to get down to the Academy in an hour's time.

Mrs. Berkeley at last decided to write a note to the Ostranders, inviting them to go in her party. Davis would be a sufficient escort for them all. As we returned to the parlor, a ring at the door, and a subsequent bustle in the hall, announced an arrival. It was Gouverneur.

Never had I known Gov. Berkeley look so well, and never had I been so glad to see him. When the first flush of greeting was over, Mrs. Berkeley took her son to the dining-room, as she wished to talk to him alone. George brought me an evening paper to point out an article in reference to the approaching election. Before they sought the column my eyes followed him across the room. Hinda was lounging in an arm-chair near the centre-table. She looked up as he passed and smiled, with a low observation, which he stopped to respond to. Then, as I had expected, he drew a chair around beside her, and sat down.

I cast my eyes on the paper, but I could not see a word. Determined to tell Gov. my unhappiness, consequent on the lieutenant's devotion to Hinda, I seized the first opportunity. Gov. heard me with some surprise, but attempted to raise my spirits by the assurance that it was the way George always behaved when he was in love, and I must show myself entirely above jealousy. It was good advice, and it would have been well for me had I taken it, but, too low-spirited to control the exhibition of my feelings, I sat all the evening moodily on a sofa, a little removed from the rest of the party. I noticed that Gov. kept his eye on his brother and Hinda, with close attention. As Gatty had gone out with Jack, and the younger girls were at the Ostranders, Mrs. Berkeley sent word in to me at nine o'clock to take her place at the tea-table, as she was busy in the library.

"Now, then," I thought, as we entered the dining-room, "if I only had that powder, it should go in Hinda's cup at once." We were a party of four at the table; Gov. opposite me, and George beside Hinda, and she played with his seal-ring all tea-time.

"Well, Gov.," I said, as the lieutenant and Hinda returned to the parlor, "do you not think him in love with her?"

"She thinks he is," answered Gov., significantly. "Let it alone, and do not trouble yourself. It will all end well."

Ah! if I could have let it alone! One slow game of whist,

which, except for her importunity would never have been played, was over. Hinda and Lieutenant Berkeley kept up an unremitting conversation all through. Tired and sick at heart with the sight of what I could not endure, I left the trio in the parlor and went to bed.

The next day I waited until I was sure that no one would offer to be my companion on the excursion, and prepared to go to Greenwich street.

I had no money. That was quite an important consideration. Nobody was at home but Gatty. I found her in Mrs. Berkeley's room, and asked if she would lend me a dollar.

Gatty went to the bureau and searched for her pocket-book. "My dear," she said at last, "this ten dollar note is all I have, nothing lower or higher."

I hesitated to take it, but Gatty said that she should not want it, — should have no use for it under three days, and I might have it all. It was a Virginia bill on the bank of the Old Dominion, as I noticed before committing it to my purse.

The gipsey was not in, but she had left the powder with Mrs. Brancton. The boy who opened the door desired me, with a shrill squeak, to walk upstairs. Mrs. Brancton was in the back room on the second floor in the midst of her toilette, as she was just going out. She declared that it was immensely fortunate that I had come just then, — she had quite given over expecting me. She then took down a box from the closet, and handed me two folded papers. I opened them, and saw that they contained an equal quantity of fine white powder.

"I thought you said the powder was dark," I remarked.

Mrs. Brancton said they were, — those that she had used, — but the gipsey had colored them by some preparation. The papers were two shillings and sixpence each. Mrs. Brancton looked a litle non-plussed at sight of the ten-dollar note, and she took down the gipsey's money-box to make the change. It took all the silver in the box, and would have taken a few shillings more had they been there, but I said it was of no consequence.

Mrs. Brancton now informed me that Hinda had been there again that very morning, and had remained for some time closeted with the gipsey. This information determined me in the carrying out of my resolution.

The lamps were just being lighted on the sidewalk as I reached Twenty-third street. I looked up at the front of the house, the upper windows of which were just illumined, and then entered for the last time, though I did not know it then. They were all

at dinner, and on joining them at the table, I found Eleanor Ostrander there. She was to accompany Mrs. Berkeley to the ball. Mrs. Chauncey had promised to call in her carriage, and she and Miss Ostrander were to remain with us all night, on their return from the ball. I had already made my aunt aware of my intention of remaining at home, to which she offered no objection.

There was quite a company in the parlors when the hour of assembling arrived. In Mrs. Berkeley's party were the Bourdlémes, the Annesleys, the Ostrander girls, Fan Douglas, Wharton Davis, and, of her own family, Agatha, Livy, and Gov. They were all off at last, and the drawing-room was quiet and deserted. The younger girls were dining out; the carriage was to call for them just before it went for Mrs. Berkeley.

I gave the order to Reynolds to have tea served at half past nine, the time when Jack had said he would return from the astronomical party, then went to the room which Gatty and I shared together, and sat down for a few minutes, my throbbing temples resting in my hands, endeavoring to resign myself to the perpetration of my contemplated deed. "The woman who deliberates, is lost" I recalled that maxim only to give it a false application. Determining to take the fatal plunge without further hesitation, or heart-flutterings, or dread of consequences, I roused myself from my meditations. Mrs. Brancton had said, that in case I wished the effect to be very powerful, I might unite the doses; consequently, I poured the contents of one paper into the other, gave it a twist on the top, put it into my pocket, and went down.

Hinda was alone in the drawing-room. I gave her a look which must have expressed my feelings toward her. She returned it by one in which hatred and envy stood revealed. I sat down near one of the windows as far as possible from her, having raised both sashes that the refreshing air of the calm September night might enter. Soon I heard a footstep on the door-stones; the front door was opened by a key, and, after lingering for a minute in the hall, Lieutenant Berkeley entered the parlor. He glanced first at Hinda, then at me, and stopping under the chandelier about half way between us, took a newspaper from his pocket, unfolded it, and looked through the columns.

Soon an organ-grinder stopped before the balcony, and commenced his performances.

"O Heavens! that's horrid enough!" said Hinda. "Mr. Berkeley, may I trouble you to close those windows?"

"Certainly," Berkeley answered. He threw aside his paper, and, crossing the room, closed the sashes of the casement furthest from me.

"You need not shut *this* window," I said, with some asperity, as he approached. He did not answer, but going out on the balcony, threw a piece of money to the man, and asked him to have the kindness to remove to the next corner.

"*I* did not want him sent away," I said, as Berkeley recrossed the sill. "I wanted to hear the music."

The lieutenant walked back to his newspaper, saying: "Reynolds may bring a tin pan and perform in the hall."

"I wanted to hear the organ-grinder," I answered. "He was playing a very pretty air."

To this Berkeley's rejoinder was, "My stars!" I was roused into wrath, and made a severe comment on his want of politeness. The lieutenant again abandoned the newspaper, and, coming back to my side, he bent over me, saying, in a low tone: "My dear Mary, I am extremely sorry; to-morrow I will have a whole posse of organ-grinders sent up for your especial gratification."

I begged his pardon for my childishness. He bent yet lower, and his lips touched my cheek. At the same instant I saw Hinda's lynx-eyes fixed upon us with a glare that disappeared as Berkeley looked around.

"Now, upon my word," said she, "that is really too much! Such public familiarities! Lieutenant Berkeley, I should not have thought you could so far have forgotten yourself, — could have been guilty of so much bad taste! Perhaps you meant it as a hint for me to withdraw. I will go before my delicacy is subjected to any further shock."

Berkeley was instantly profuse in his apologies, — he begged a thousand pardons, — he had not intended to shock her delicacy in the least. He interposed between her and the door to prevent her egress, and promised that nothing of the kind should happen again if she would not go.

Going was very far from her thoughts, and she suffered herself to be led back to her seat, and went on to pursue a conversation for which so fine an opening had been made. His opinion of her delicacy had apparently gone up several degrees by the late exhibition.

I bore it till the clock struck ten; then I rose and went into the dining-room where the table had long been set.

"Is Mr. Jack in yet?" I said. I received an affirmative response. "Tell Jarvis to call him." I walked about the dining-room in an actual fever. I heard Jarvis go upstairs. Some minutes intervened till Jack came down. Now was my time to

throw the powder in Hinda's cup, but the girl was bustling around the waiter, and I had not the voice to dismiss her.

As the trio came into the dining-room, I passed for a moment into the hall, and having emptied the contents of the paper into my hand, returned to the table at which the other members of the party were already seated. I was trembling in every limb. Reynolds stood right behind me. I could not throw in the powder before him. Fortune, or the devil, rather, aided me. The heavy urn was empty.

"Go and send me some hot water, Reynolds," I said, in a voice which my agitation rendered wellnigh inarticulate. The lieutenant looked around at me, and Hinda said, carelessly: "Oh, you need not dilute the beverage for *me*, Mary, — make it strong as lye."

"I will," I answered. The peculiar intonation of my reply kept the lieutenant's eye fastened on me for a minute, with a look which seemed to penetrate the very thoughts of my heart. He looked away, and I began slowly to pour the black decoction. I heard Reynolds coming up the stairs. Replacing the tea-pot which I had tilted forward till it rested on a small segment of its circular base, I laid my hand over the steaming cup and threw in the powder.

There it lay, floating on the surface of the tea like a sprinkling of flour on a ground of pitch. I glanced around. Hinda was dabbling in the ice-bowl. The lieutenant had just turned towards Jack to answer some question in reference to the election. Reynolds was crossing the sill. I poured a few drops of milk on the powder to drown it, then checked my hand, observing: "You don't take milk, I believe."

"No matter," said she, "that is very little, and the tea is strong."

It stood beside her on the table. She stirred it and sipped a few spoonfuls. As I handed Lieutenant Berkeley's cup to him, I found his eyes on my face with an expression so peculiar, grave, and keen, that I grew actually faint. I hastened to fill my own cup, and swallowed the contents in haste to revive my strength.

The shade which had crossed the lieutenant's features disappeared, and he resumed his conversation with Hinda. She asked again for his seal ring, — he rolled it across the table, and she put it on. Then she turned to me with the modest request that I would hand my ring to her.

"Shall I do it?" I said, turning to him.

"As you please," answered Berkeley. "I should not refuse Miss Hinda my head, if she asked it."

I took off the ring and threw it to her. She caught it, exclaiming that it was "an adorable little gem," and fixing her bright swimming eyes on me coaxingly, she said: "Let me wear it for you; people who own things never care for them."

"When they tire of them," I answered, in the same tone.

"Do you hear that?" said Hinda. "Mary has almost acknowledged that she is tired of this ring?"

"She has quite acknowledged it, I think," replied Berkeley.

Hinda looked again at me, saying: "Can I wear it?"

"I leave it entirely to Lieutenant Berkeley," I answered, scarcely able to speak, for I was suffering cruelly.

"Then, of course, I can make but one decision," he replied, with a smile that appeared to me positively fiendish. Hinda put the ring on her finger, and I felt that if I had had a pistol I could have shot her on the spot. As for the powders, I wished every one in the gipsey's cabinet lay ready for her second cup.

By this time Jack, who had hitherto been wrapped up in the paper, was ready for his tea, and as he entered at once on a discussion of some article in the "rabid abolition journal," which he had been reading, whence the conversation turned on the split in the Democratic party, attention was effectually diverted from me.

Before we left the table the young ladies returned from the dinner-party, Mary full of the report of some news on a bulletin which had been told her in the course of the evening, wherein both the brothers were so deeply interested that Hinda was entirely forgotten. Whether saddened by that circumstance, or haunted by other unpleasant shades, I could not decide; but for some reason, that fair damsel seemed depressed. She sat down on a sofa by the fire, where, having remained for some time in total silence, she pleaded a headache and said she was going to bed.

She had been gone but a very short time when the party from the ball arrived. The Ostranders came in for a few minutes, and Mrs. Berkeley ordered wine to be served. Gatty had gone upstairs with George. In the midst of the conversation in the drawing-room where the whole company were assembled, I took Gov.'s arm, and, leading him into the hall, informed him of the incident of my ring at the tea-table. Gov. said I was crazy to have given it to her.

"*He* said so, Gov., and what could I do? He said if she asked for his head, he could not refuse it!"

"Well, do you suppose he would not refuse it? Haven't I told you he means nothing by talking in that way?"

"But just think of it, Gov. Could you, if you were engaged to a woman whom you really loved, be unremitting in your attentions for four successive days to one to whom you were utterly indifferent?"

"I cannot answer for myself," said Gov., "but I can answer positively for him. Your giving away your engagement-ring was a very bad move. I should ask Hinda for it again."

I said, I wished I could wring her neck.

"I wish you could, — but you can't," Gov. rejoined, "but I will tell you what you can do. You can ask him what he means. If, as you say, you have been unconscious and dignified for four days, your conduct to-night has been conscious enough; therefore you can make it no worse by demanding an explanation of his conduct."

"You don't think he does right, Gov.?"

"Certainly not. I think he behaves in a manner very much the reverse of right. You have my advice."

I acted on it. Gov. went back to the parlor, and I ascended the staircase. The door of Berkeley's room was standing open; the light streamed from the apartment, and as I drew near I heard Gatty's voice within, in conversation with her brother.

I came to the door. Gatty was reclining on the sofa, and the braids of her dark hair had fallen over the cushion. The lieutenant stood by the mantel-piece, with a cigar not yet lighted.

I knocked slightly, then asked to speak to him a moment. He threw down the match which was not yet ignited, and walked out immediately, I stopped in the darkened hall at the head of the staircase; he had followed. I told him that if he loved Hinda more than me, he was free, — I released him entirely from his engagement, — yes, I would do it on the very steps of the altar, rather than condemn him to a life of unhappiness by marrying him, when his heart was with another.

I waited a moment for the answer; none was given. I felt that my surmise was just. My bursting heart could no longer resist the conviction. It was more than I could bear. I gasped forth, "O George!" caught his hand to my lips, and attempted to run down the stairs.

But my descent was prevented. Berkeley had folded me in his arms, and laying my aching forehead on his shoulder, I told him that he had laid a weight on my heart that he must take away. I said I thought he had been very unkind, very unfeel-

ing. I would have said more, but my heart was too full. I heard the old story over again, — love — vows — promises — hollow mockery. I listened, and was reassured. I believed it, and was once more happy. The most inexplicable thing was, that Berkeley was not conscious that any cause of offence originated with him. On the contrary, he had labored under the impression that I had been displeased with him not altogether justly. Finding it impossible to convince him, I gave up the attempt. There was an impression which I feared he still retained, and I asked him if he thought that I had intended to use his money in defraying expenses I had incurred previous to my marriage.

"Let me see," said Berkeley. "'One month after the day of my marriage with G. L. Berkeley, I promise to pay,' &c. It looked devilish like it, I must say."

"I assure you solemnly," I answered, "that I intended to refund every cent eventually, out of my own property."

"Well, my darling, said Berkeley, with a laugh, "there is no occasion for solemnity. I should have been only too happy to pay your debts at the sacrifice of half my estate."

He sat down at the head of the stairs, and made me take my place beside him. Oh! had I only told him then and there of my last mad act of folly! Dreadful as the confession would have been, he would have saved me from the fearful consequences. But I did not now think of that. I thought of nothing but my happiness, — all the greater by contrast with the misery from which I had just been relieved. I told him that I wished I could think it was in my power to inflict as much suffering on him as he had on me for the last six days; but the answer which I received was sufficient compensation for all that I had undergone.

Voices in the hall soon gave warning of the Ostranders' departure. As Mrs. Berkeley came up the staircase, she stopped to say a few words to me about the bridesmaids' dresses, and the cards which were to be circulated on the following day; then she observed that it was twelve o'clock, and I ought to be in bed. George detained me for a few moments after his mother had gone, to bid me an affectionate good-night, after which I went to my own apartment.

I was very weary, went quickly to bed, and fell asleep while Gatty was saying her prayers. I could sleep now, for I was happy, in spite of the consciousness of my error with regard to Hinda. The sense that I was reinstated in Lieutenant Berkeley's confidence, and had received the assurance of his undiminished affection, was sufficient. The course of true love was again running smooth.

My slumbers were not altogether tranquil. I had confused dreams, and trouble was their chief complexion. It seemed that I was wandering through a long and dimly-lighted hall. A flight of steps led down to a saloon in which many people were dancing, and the sound of their music and merry-making rose to my ears. As I sought to join them, many of them — goblin forms, playing strange antics — fled up the stairway. They all wore masks with curious devices; and there was one who seemed to hold aloof from his fellows, clad in a long white garment which was held around him by a thin and wasted hand. They thronged about me, and I heard the words: "Which will you choose?" I pressed through them to the window at the remote end of the hall, where stood that masked figure in its long white garment. The other goblins fled with shrieks of laughter back, leaving me alone with my fearful companion. I laid my hand on his; colder than ice were those thin and clammy fingers. "Let me see your face?" I said. "Will you see a death's head?" was the question. "Yes," I said, in awe. The mask was unbuckled, and revealed to my gaze a face so wan and ghastly, that I could scarcely trace the lineaments of Dan Berkeley. The hollow eyes gleamed sadly on me; then the fingers tightened on my hand, and the features of the face shrivelled and shrunk till a human skull supplied their place, and the folds of the winding-sheet drooped round a skeleton form.

I shuddered, and awoke. As I roused and turned over, I was surprised to find that Gatty had abandoned her place by my side. The lights in the apartment were turned high, and there were sounds of running to and fro with great confusion in the house below. Worried and disturbed I arose, determined on further investigation, not without many forebodings of ill to myself. On consulting my watch I found that I had been in bed little over an hour. It was after one. I proceeded to arrange my hair, and had just finished that operation, when Livy, with her dress in a terrible state of disorder, rushed into the room.

"What in the world is the matter?"

"Hinda — Hinda is dying, — hurry down stairs," she cried, in fearful agitation. I stopped her as she was leaving, and insisted on knowing what was the matter. "A romantic fever," I suggested.

"Indeed, it is nothing romantic," Livy responded. "She has been violently sick for more than an hour, but she would not let me call anybody until she become unconscious. I called up Jack, and he went right away for the doctor; then I roused Mrs.

Berkeley, and now the whole house is up, and there is the greatest confusion. She is almost dead. Jack has come, and the doctor is expected every minute."

I hurried to dress. I omitted nothing, — neither collar, nor sleeve, nor belt, was forgotten. I wished that there was something else to put on. It was a very white face that I saw in the glass; if I had had rouge I should have daubed it on without hesitation. On coming down I found the hall and all the apartments on the second story lighted. Hinda's was the middle room on the floor. I entered boldly. That scene must remain forever indelibly fixed in my memory. Upon a blanket hastily spread out on the floor lay Hinda. She was clad in a long white night-dress elaborately ruffled; her hair drawn back from her ears, was knotted at the top of her head; her eyes were half open, though the orbs were sightless; her breath came quick and short, and her whole frame was evidently reduced to a state of great exhaustion. The room was full. There were Mrs. Chauncey, Mrs. Berkeley, Gatty, Olivia, Eleanor Ostrander, and Mary and Bessie Berkeley. The maid-servants presented a spectacle of affrighted visages huddled at the folded doors. Of mankind, there was a fair proportion also, consisting of Jack and Gouverneur Berkeley, and the lieutenant, who stood just within the door. I did not see him until I was entering. He drew aside to afford me free ingress.

"Here is Mary," I heard Bessie say, "how beautiful she looks."

Gatty, who was standing next her sister, looked around on this observation, and, as though taken by surprise at my appearance, said, in a tone of unalloyed distress: "O my God! yes."

In the Babel of tongues that filled the room, this low-toned exclamation was lost to every ear but mine. George had not glanced at me on my entrance. As I shrunk into a corner where I leaned on the back of an arm-chair for support, a sharp ring below announced the arrival of the two physicians. The servants, who, hitherto bewildered by a series of incessant and contradictory orders from their mistress, had been running distractedly hither and thither, made a general rush for the front door. As the two gentlemen entered, Mrs. Berkeley bade Reynolds keep the women outside, and the door was shut.

The confusion in the room was silenced for a minute, while every one anxiously awaited the verdict of the associate physicians. They knelt, one on each side of the patient, turned back her head, pulled open her eyes, and gazed at the twitching

muscles of the face. I saw the change of countenance in both. The elder arose from his knees, and, turning toward Mrs. Berkeley, darted his keen dark eye around the room.

"Madam," he said, "this young lady is poisoned."

The low, decided tone, jarred through my whole frame. I heard Mrs. Berkeley say: "Well, so she had thought;" and in a voice almost drowned by the many others which were sounding through the room, I said: "Pshaw,—she has only taken something that has disagreed with her."

George Berkeley gave me a look which must have silenced me had there been any words unspoken on my lips. I now heard repeated between the physicians the word "poison," and a minute after, "arsenic."

"Arsenic," exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley, "how can it be possible? There is no such thing in the house."

"Who poured tea to-night?" said Bessie. "Good Heavens! Mary, it was you!"

A chill, in which seemed condensed the very essence of the frozen Scandinavian hell ran through my veins, as the scrutinizing eye of the physician fell upon my face. "What the deuce has *tea* to do with it, Bessie?" said the lieutenant.

"You saw no arsenic near the table, did you, Mary?" asked Mrs. Chauncey. I replied in the negative.

This remark was scarcely noticed. Hinda's precarious situation engrossed all eyes and thoughts. I stood in positive agony of soul. I never had given arsenic to Hinda! It could not be that I was guilty of murder! I heard, like one in a dreadful dream, the orders of the physicians about brandy, hot water, and the stomach-pump. Then I heard George Berkeley say: "Anything, gentlemen; only, for God's sake, save her life!"

I had heard enough. Through the mist gathering over my vision, I could dimly follow the forms in the apartment. I heard the physicians call on one of the young gentlemen for assistance. I could not see who volunteered. I turned to leave the room, and staggered into the hall. In the mirror, I caught the reflection of my figure. My hair, escaped from its band, had fallen over my forehead and neck, shading a face that was deadly pale, and my eyes were glittering with an unnatural light. Jack came out to descend the stairs. I asked if he thought Hinda very much worse.

"She may live till sunrise," Jack responded. He paused down. Until then, no doubt of her restoration had crossed my mind. I struggled to move toward the staircase, and I ran

against the balustrade. At the same instant I felt an arm thrown around me. I was supported across the hall. The door of Lieutenant Berkeley's room was opened, — I was within, and he was with me.

"I am dizzy, George! do not leave me," I said, with some difficulty. Berkeley placed me on the sofa; I bowed my forehead on the cushion. He brought me a glass of water, forced me to drink it, and, kneeling by my side, raised my head on his shoulder.

"What do you think, George?" I said, in a tone so ill-commanded that I wondered he had caught the words at all.

"I think," replied Berkeley, in the low, calm tone of ordinary conversation, "that it goes ahead of the pawn-tickets."

"*What* does?"

"But," he continued, "you are perfectly safe if you will but trust *me;* life itself is involved."

"Very much troubled you are about her life," I answered bitterly, — "so concerned to preserve it."

"Who cares about *her* life?" said Berkeley, "or, who said any thing about it? You misunderstand me; but without going again into that subject, I must ask what you have done, and why you did it?"

"Nothing; I am innocent," I answered. "If I were to tell you that the late scene was brought about through my instrumentality, and Hinda should die, I would be finely in your power."

Berkeley withdrew immediately the arm that lay around my neck and rose. I lifted my head, but averted my face, not caring to meet his eye, or betray the expression of my features. When Berkeley spoke again, it was with a distant manner, and a cold, dry tone.

"I do not suppose, Miss Brandegee, you need to be told that no lady *can* be in the power of a man of honor. Your faith in my claim to that character has probably failed on this occasion. When it returns, you will have the goodness to recollect, that whether that young lady lives or dies, it will not weigh a feather in the balance."

"And you," I interrupted, "will recollect *this*, if you please: that not to you, or any other 'man of honor,' — any other human being, — will I profess myself guilty of that of which I am entirely innocent." I saw that he did not believe me, and it stung me to the quick. I left the room. In the hall I found assembled all the family with the exception of Mrs. Berkeley, who was alone with the doctors and their patient. George had

followed me slowly. He took a station by the door of his mother's sitting-room, which he held unmoved without looking once at me. Mrs. Chauncey was talking to the young ladies. I sat down on the hall sofa, taking as calm a view of the case as I could. To have told Lieutenant Berkeley the true reason why I had given that powder to Hinda, would have been to ensure his contempt forever, and to say that I was guilty of her murder, would have been false. A continual wonderment as to how Hinda could have fallen in with arsenic, was kept up by everybody with the exception of the lieutenant, who retained his position, and Gouverneur, who was walking moodily about the hall. Presently, Miss Wriothesley was seized with a series of spasms, and the doors and windows were thrown open to afford her free air. For two hours — immeasurably, intolerably long did they seem — lasted this terrible state of affairs. Hinda, although very weak, was as much alive as ever, and having been liberally dosed with brandy, was put to bed. It was nearly four o'clock when the physicians went away.

"Well," remarked Gov., "as Hinda is not dead, we'll have a smoke." His cigar-case was produced, offered to his brothers, and the incense from three cigars ascended throughout the hall. Mrs. Berkeley now besought us to go to bed. In obedience to this suggestion I had just reached the foot of the staircase, when I heard Mary Berkeley say that Hinda was anxious to have the matter investigated. She wanted Reynolds, Jarvis, and the maids to be examined.

At these words, Gov. and Jack, who were whispering in a corner of the hall, turned suddenly; but before either one could countermand the measure, George said boldly:

"I will have no questioning of servants under this roof."

He spoke in a tone of haughty decision, which caused a few minutes of silence to ensue.

"The coroner will probably have something of the kind going on," said Mrs. Berkeley, with a laugh.

"Miss Wriothesley is alive, I presume?" asked her son. Mrs. Berkeley granted that she was. "Well, then, madam, what can the coroner have to do with it?" asked the lieutenant. At the same moment, as Reynolds came up the staircase, Mary turned to him with a question that I did not catch.

"Mary, be silent!" said George to his sister. "Reynolds, you may go down stairs." The brothers walked off through the gallery. Gov. looked coldly, and Jack contemptuously on me. I dragged myself to the head of the staircase with weary steps.

On the turn near the landing-place I stopped. George followed me to the top. It was so dark that the expression of his features was not legible. The dim rays of the early morning, falling through the skylight, gave an unearthly complexion to his handsome face. Irresistible was the impulse that led me to arrest his progress. I took his arm, and, in an almost choking voice, I said: "So, then, you do not believe me, Lieutenant Berkeley!"

Leisurely withdrawing his cigar between his fingers, and resting his elbow on the balustrade, he replied: "You do not trust me, little sister."

"Do not call me that!" I exclaimed, "for it is a name that was given me by one who would have believed in my truth, in spite of all the machinations of my enemies. Your suspicions are grossly insulting, and the confession for which you ask shall never be wrung from me. You said to me to-night, — to me who am innocent, and your own betrothed bride, — that should Hinda Wriothesley die, it would not weigh a feather in the balance; which means, of course, that whether she lives or dies, you cast me off."

"You did not understand me," Berkeley answered. "I shall never forsake you, Mary, — there is no human power that can alienate me from you but your own." He encircled my waist with his arm, and drawing me closely to his side, he continued: "You offered me an insult not long ago, which I thoroughly forgive, as I know that you were not accountable, under such an excitement, for your words. I ask you once more, Mary, *trust me*, and say nothing about being in the *power* of one who loves you as his own soul."

"I am not afraid of you," I answered. "Say as you like, and do as you please, I defy you all! Do you hear, Mr. Berkeley? I say, I defy you!"

"But good God! are you crazy?" exclaimed Berkeley. "Do you not know, that if you were convicted of this offence against the law, you would ——" He paused, and I filled the sentence.

"That I would be sent to the State prison? yes, I know it."

"Worse than that, Mary. This is the highest capital crime."

I looked up in his face, my whole frame trembling violently.

"Do you mean, George, that — that I — would be sent —" Berkeley drew me to his side so tightly that I could with difficulty draw my breath, and, in a low whisper in my ear, he added: "*To the gallows!*"

It was a moment of such suffering as I have seldom undergone. A fearful shivering seized upon me. My head dropped

against his shoulder, and had it not been for the support of his arm I should have fallen.

"And do *you* tell me that?" I said. "Can *you* say that so coldly, so heartlessly to me, whom you once professed to love? Well, then, to the gallows! Yes, God knows I should suffer less than at this moment!"

"Not one syllable," returned Berkeley, "of my professions do I wish to retract. Understand me clearly, Mary. Tell me the whole, and I will never desert you, — come what may. All I ask is, to know you. Give *me* your confidence, and tell *me* the truth, and I do not care if you are the devil himself, or if you tell the rest of the world the blackest lie that was ever invented. I will challenge every gentleman who shall dare to breathe a single slander against you. Mary, after this moment I shall never again ask you this question; for the last time that I shall so adjure you, *confess*."

It was becoming insupportable. The touch of his lip to my cheek was torture, — it was like fire against ice. I drew away, and a desperate struggle released me.

"I say I have nothing to confess. I may have erred, but no crime lies at my door, and if you *could* play a magnanimous part, you would trust me without a question! I should never doubt and cavil, and urge *you* to confess in this ignominious manner. Say no more."

Berkeley replaced the cigar between his lips and descended the stairs. I heard Mrs. Berkeley come into the hall. "Hinda thinks it a clearly established fact, George, I am sorry to say," she observed. "Bessie says that Mary poured the tea."

"D——n Bessie," answered the lieutenant.

"You may talk in that way till doomsday," Mrs. Berkeley responded. "It will not assist Mary one iota, or you either, in the eyes of the world."

A feeling of compunction arose in my heart. I could not bear that any disgrace should attach to him through my means, and, leaning over the balusters, I said: "Aunt Judith, do not couple George's name with mine any more, if you please."

"That is all settled, Miss Brandegee," said Berkeley, in a tone which fell on my heart like clods on a coffin. I made no answer, passing on to my own apartment. I have since wondered how I could have slept at all. I did sleep, nevertheless, and was aroused by the summons to breakfast. I was tempted to plead a headache, which was truly the case, and thus avoid going down but feeling that I must in all things avoid suspicion — that if

there were no flaw in my conduct I might possibly establish the fact of my innocence — I said I would be shortly down. I rose, thinking it somewhat strange that I did not find Gatty by my side, and having dressed, I went to Mrs. Berkeley's room. To my low knock there was at first no answer, then my aunt's voice uttered, "come in." Gatty was in her mother's bed, not having yet arisen. Mrs. Berkeley stood fastening the last hook in her dress.

"Why did you sleep away from me, Gatty?" I asked. There was no answer from either mother or daughter. I next ventured to say that breakfast was ready.

"Aunt Messy and Eleanor have just been called," said Gatty, in a low tone of cold politeness, — "we shall wait breakfast for them."

"How is Hinda this morning, Aunt Judith?" said I.

"You devil! how dare you ask? Better than you wish her to be, I dare swear."

It was what I expected; my presentiments could have had no other fulfilment. I turned, before leaving the room, to say: "I would like to see your son George, Mrs. Berkeley."

"Well, that is no affair of mine," she answered. I went out, and after a moment's hesitation, entered Hinda's room. She was lying upon the bed in the darkened apartment, Bessie Berkeley seated by her side. Bessie scarcely bowed a good-morning. Hinda fastened on me a hideous glare.

"I want my ring, Miss Wriothesley," I said, without prefacing the demand with polite inquiries which would not have been appreciated. Hinda murmured something about not having strength to take it off, in a low tone to the compassionate Bessie, and withdrew it apparently with difficulty. She had, however, sufficient strength to throw it at me as soon as it was removed from her fair fingers. It rolled across the room to the door. As I quitted the apartment, I met Livy and Mary Berkeley on their way to the breakfast-room. Livy looked at me sadly. Mary took no notice of me. A moment after, Eleanor Ostrander followed them; her manner was as frigid as an iceberg.

Indignation swelled in my breast, and the sentiment: "Is thy servant a dog, to be treated thus?" rose in my heart. One of the footmen, Jarvis, was coming up the staircase.

"Go and tell Mr. George, that I wish to see him in the library at once," I said. Jarvis knocked first at the lieutenant's door, then at Jack's, each time without response. Then, having gone to Gouverneur's room, in which it was evident that the three

brothers were holding a council, he returned to me with the information that Mr. George would join me immediately.

I entered the apartment designated, and threw myself into an arm-chair by the centre-table. Regarding the scene which awaited me, I could have no settled thought. The confession which I had already refused him, I was fully determined never to make. He himself had said that he would never ask it again. The last words which I had heard from his lips: "That is all settled, Miss Brandegee," rang in my ears. My hope that he would yet rise superior to the force of circumstantial evidence, rested solely on the fact, that he had hitherto taken my part with a spirit which I would not have imagined, judging from his conduct throughout the previous week. But never had I been at such an utter loss to anticipate his intentions, as when Lieutenant Berkeley's footstep in the hall was succeeded by his entrance into the apartment.

He had not undressed since I had last seen him, as I judged from the disorder of his attire, but never had I known him so thoroughly composed in manner, — never had the cold expression of his handsome face conveyed so painful a sensation to my soul as now, that I knew it the harbinger of a broken faith. He bade me good-morning, crossed the apartment, and leaned his arm on the mantel-piece, a position which he kept through the whole interview. He was prepared, I saw plainly; how well prepared, I could not decide. Chords tightly drawn may be snapped by a vigorous blow.

"May I trespass so far on your politeness as to ask you to spare a few minutes to me?" I said.

"Since you do me the honor," he answered, with a bow, "I am entirely at your service."

The knell of his confidence was tolled in my ears as those courteous yet distant words were uttered.

"Yesterday," I said, "I was on terms of intimacy with this family. To-day, I have received treatment from certain of its members, which makes a longer stay under this roof inconsistent with my self-respect. I have also been led to think that, for no sufficient reason, and on grounds which have not been explained, my reputation will be blasted as soon as I have departed from this house."

"I beg leave to say," returned he, with unruffled composure, "that that is a surmise on your part, and a wholly mistaken one. There is not a member of this family whose intention it is ever to utter a single syllable against you. Your reputation will be

compromised only by yourself, in the step which I am now for the first time aware you propose taking."

"Can I remain in this house under these circumstances?" said I.

"Under these circumstances, I should judge this house to be the safest place for you," Berkeley rejoined.

"Very safe, — and pleasant," said I. "For my own private satisfaction, I would like to know of what I am accused?"

"No one has accused you, Miss Brandegee. We do not accuse ladies. With the rest of the family it is merely suspicion, which I never have permitted to influence me."

"I am to conclude then, sir, that with you it is certainty? That you have any proof of my having committed the crime which you lay to my charge, I firmly deny."

Berkeley said, that if I had not thrown a dose of arsenic in Miss Wriothesley's cup the previous evening at the tea-table, he would like to inquire what it was.

I could not answer, except by asking why, if he recognized it as arsenic, he had permitted her to drink it. Berkeley replied, that he could not have sworn whether it was arsenic, or sugar, or snow, — that he had not given the subject a thought, until the scene which followed within three hours made it not only a natural inference, but a logical conclusion.

I answered, that my faith in him would not have been abated by any such circumstance. He made no reply, and I continued:

"You are acting a part, Lieutenant Berkeley, far, far below the high standard by which I have always measured your character, hitherto with satisfaction. To condemn me on merely circumstantial evidence (Berkeley opened his eyes at the term), and to desert me so ruthlessly, is conduct which baffles all censure from me."

"The proper course, in your view," replied the lieutenant, "for a man in my situation to take, would be simply to say: This adorable creature may have deceived me and the rest of mankind, may have disregarded all the laws of society, broken all the ten commandments, outraged earth and offended Heaven; yet, asking no questions whatever, and believing all that she refuses to tell me, I remain a mad, infatuated, most consummate fool, and am content to remain so! Is not that it, Miss Brandegee, in the Queen's English? Below this exalted standard of yours, I have fallen so far as to ask the *truth* from your lips; and, whatever it were, I should have made you my wife in spite of the devil."

"And to be your wife," I responded, digressing from the sub-

ject of the confession which this speech would have fully determined me against making, had I not been fully determined before, "to be your wife, I suppose you consider the height of any woman's ambition. To be your wife, would be sufficient compensation for all the wrongs, and sufficient reward for all the merits in the universe."

A contemptuous curl of the lip was the only reply.

"A few minutes ago," I proceeded, "you said that my reputation would be compromised only by myself, in leaving this house. I am then to conclude, that you do not consider the breaking of a young lady's engagement a thing that will compromise her in the least."

"Of course," replied Berkeley, "the fact of your having broken the engagement will be well understood. You need not be told that you have only to assign your own reasons, and make them as public as you please."

This was decisive. Struggling in vain to control my emotion, I said, in a faltering tone: "And this, then, *is* the end of it. I release you now and forever from any obligation to me. I trust that no recollection with which I am associated will interfere with your future felicity, and that your name will suffer nothing from ever having had the misfortune of being connected with mine. I leave the house this morning. Here is the ring which you gave me a few weeks ago." I drew it from my finger. Berkeley made no motion to take it, and I laid it on the table.

"In plain terms," I continued, "you think me a murderess. Could I use the word so boldly if I were? At the same time that I declare that your suspicion has alienated you from me everlastingly, so that under no circumstances could I ever be induced to become your wife. I say, as God is my witness, George Berkeley, I am guiltless of the crime of which I am suspected."

He looked at me as though he thought I had committed the blackest perjury. I rose, and came up to him.

"Although, as I have just said, there is no consideration on earth which, after this moment, could influence me even to think of marrying you, yet the parting from what I once loved must cost me a pang. I confess to nothing but the sin of loving you too well, and my sin has been made the instrument of my punishment. Forget that we ever were more than we promised here in this room, and in the presence of that witness who is powerless to know how that promise has been redeemed!" And I looked up at Dan Berkeley's portrait, which frowned down blackly on me from the canvas.

The lieutenant took the hand which I had extended, saying: "My best wishes for your happiness, Miss Brandegee. If I can be of any service, you have only to command me."

There was no shadow of relenting on the inflexible features. I went on.

"George," I said, laying my hand on his arm, "for the last time, *dear* George, in the name of the love which is buried to-day, I ask this little favor! I plead for the heart which, though it must not break, will throb once more for your sake; grant me one word of kindness, though it be only sister! All the world goes when you abandon me! in this moment, then, take pity,—have mercy upon me!"

I might as well have looked for pity to the brazen gates of Janus, or asked mercy of an adamantine rock. He made me no answer. There was even an ill-governed movement, a half-suppressed sigh of impatience.

"Will you let me kiss you once before I go?" I said, my voice trembling so that I could scarcely speak.

As he bent to suffer the caress, I threw my arms around his neck. Ten times more distant was the icy manner,—ten times colder grew the expressionless eye. It was too much. My wounded pride, which my love had for a moment crushed, rose to my aid, coupled with indignation, and, as my hands fell from his shoulders, I exclaimed, in a passion, that I wished he had never kissed me; and so help me Heaven, he never should again.

"A good vow, that," said Berkeley, coldly, "but rather rash."

"Oh, your heart is stone," I said, sinking down on the sofa with a groan which I could not suppress, and at that instant Mrs. Berkeley opened the door.

She crossed the room to the table whereon lay my engagement-ring.

"Won't you wear this till to-night?" she asked.

"No, I will *never* wear it again," I exclaimed, in hot indignation, which found its way to my tone.

Mrs. Berkeley smiled superciliously, and then inquired if we had made the final arrangements.

Berkeley answered that those arrangements must be left to Miss Brandegee's discretion. If she preferred to proclaim the dissolution of her engagement now, he would leave town that day; and if she chose to accompany him to the steps of the altar, and refuse him before the whole congregation, he bowed to her decision.

"The offer, Lieutenant Berkeley," said I, "is a very handsome

one, but thank God, I am not fallen so low as to act such a deception."

Mrs. Berkeley burst into a laugh. "I am glad you have not fallen so low!" she said. "O Mary, you are too absurd for any thing! Well, in any event, you will have the consolation of knowing that the whole town will cry down the 'unprincipled Berkeleys,' and extol you to the skies. George, do go brush your hair, and resign yourself to the fate of humanity."

The lieutenant looked at his watch. As he was about leaving the room the man Jarvis appeared at the door, and asked some question in a subdued tone.

"I don't know," answered Berkeley shortly, "what the devil do you come to me about *that* for! Ask the ladies."

He left the room, while Jarvis, advancing toward Mrs. Berkeley, inquired what cards he was to take, and what ones were to fall to the lot of Reynolds.

"None," said Mrs. Berkeley, "they are not to go — that is, you may wait for further orders." Jarvis cast an evil look at me, and left the room.

"How dusty these statues are!" Mrs. Berkeley remarked. "I must speak to Reynolds about that. Come, I want you to come to breakfast."

"I do not want any."

"Well, you need not eat any, you little fool; but you must come to the table to save appearances, as there are guests under the roof. Can't you see that you only act against yourself?"

I rose, and followed her obediently. In the hall I found Jack and George Berkeley, who were holding a low consultation. Mrs. Berkeley stopped at the dining-room door, to speak to Reynolds about the statues. Jarvis was coming down the staircase, and I took occasion to ask him to go to the livery-stable to order a carriage for me.

"I'll think about it," was the man's rejoinder.

"Jarvis," said Jack, whose ear had caught the words, "you must not answer Miss Brandegee in that manner."

"Jarvis," added the lieutenant, "go into the library, and when I come down I will write you a cheque."

Jarvis looked thunderstruck, but obeyed without a word. "Lieutenant Berkeley," I said, as he passed me, "I do not wish to be made the instrument of the least family inconvenience. Jarvis will probably never offend in this way again. I beg that you will not dismiss him."

Berkeley made no answer, but went on up the staircase, while

I followed Jack through the hall. All were in the breakfast-room, with the exception of the lieutenant, who made his appearance a few minutes after we were seated at the table. I sat with my coffee-cup before me, and if I looked as I felt, must have been the very picture of woe. No one seemed at all changed, except in the circumstance of noticing me. Mrs. Chauncey, who united all the simplicity of good breeding, with the shrewdness of an ambassador, would never have awakened a suspicion that she noticed any by-play whatsoever, but discussed with equal *sang froid* the merits of a party candidate, and the defects of the cap-ribbons tied beneath her wrinkled chin.

Mrs. Berkeley suddenly remembered a letter which was to go that morning, and she bade Reynolds tell Jarvis to take it to the post-office. Reynolds said, hesitatingly, that he did not think Jarvis could go.

"Can't go! what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley.

Reynolds was released from the embarrassment of answering by Lieutenant Berkeley, who quietly said: "I have dismissed him."

"Dismissed Jarvis!" she repeated. "Upon my soul, the people in my house are carrying all before them, and announce it in superior style!"

"If my mode of expression displeased you," answered her son, "I can remodel it. *You* have dismissed him."

"I am lucky in the information," responded Mrs. Berkeley. "Suppose you should inform me what I have done it for?"

"Readily," replied the lieutenant. "He was disrespectful to one of the young ladies of the family."

This, Mrs. Berkeley appeared to think reason sufficient, for she made no further remark.

It was a long, a fearfully weary half hour. We had risen at last from the table, and all passed through to the front parlor. I sat down in a corner near the door at the further end of the room, under a depression past my power to conquer. Nobody spoke to me, — nobody looked at me. Berkeley came in from the hall with his hat in his hand, and asked if anybody had any commands for Albany.

"Are you going now to Albany, George?" said Mrs. Chauncey, her gray eyes twinkling as she looked up into his face.

The lieutenant replied, that he might be detained down town on business, but he should leave in the night train if not that afternoon.

Mrs. Chauncey said she had business down town too. She

was going to see the artist about Dan's portrait. That for Mrs. Berkeley had already been finished; she knew her's would not be done till spring. She would go down there with him, if he were not in a hurry.

He would be most happy to wait for her, and she bustled on upstairs. The lieutenant stood leaning against the mantel-piece talking to Eleanor Ostrander. I wondered how he could be so self-possessed, and watched him in an agony. A few minutes passed. There was a gentle ring at the front-door. When it was opened, I heard a squeaking voice in the hall, — I thought it sounded familiar. Reynolds stepped within the parlor.

"Mrs. Berkeley, ma'am, there's a little boy here with a bill about the medicine. I think he said the young lady ——"

"Medicine, — young lady," repeated Mrs. Berkeley. "It must be the druggist has sent the bill for what was bought last night."

"I paid for that," said Jack. "It is not the druggist's affair."

"Well, it must be Hinda's affair, since nobody here seems to know any thing about it. Send the boy in, Reynolds."

The little boy entered, looking almost frightened to death at the sight of so many ladies and gentlemen. I knew him at once, — it was the same who had opened the door for me at the gipsey's. The conversation between the lieutenant and Eleanor Ostrander was suspended, and the attention of both was attracted toward the focus of the general interest. The little boy had been immediately addressed by the august queen of the company. She asked him who he was.

"Madam Follet's boy, ma'am."

"Madam who?"

"The astrologist, ma'am, — the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, who can tell and foretell, can furnish information as to lost property, deceased friends, absent lovers, and stolen spoons; also, lucky numbers and magic charms, and tells very thoughts, and knows ——"

"Well, what the deuce did she send you here for?" asked Jack.

"Young lady, sir, who called yesterday gave her a bad bill. She would like to have it changed."

"Oh, it is Hinda's affair, — I remember," said Mrs. Berkeley, "she was forever dabbling in clairvoyants and this sort of mummery."

"Gatty took the bill from the boy's hand. "Ten dollars, — bank of the Old Dominion, Virginia! Why, I lent a bill on this bank to Mary yesterday."

"Bad bill," said Gouverneur, advancing from the dining-room, "let me see it;" and then (God bless him, as I do every time I think of it), he took the bill from Gatty's hand, observed that it was perfectly good, but as there might be counterfeits out on the bank, he would change it. He took out his pocket-book and handed another note to the boy.

"Go up and ask Hinda about it now," said Mrs. Berkeley to her daughter.

I struggled to rise.

"My mistress is very sorry, ma'am," said the boy. "She told me to tell the young lady, that she would not have said any thing about it, only she gave so *much* change. All that was bought, was a little white powder."

"A white what?" cried Mrs. Berkeley, her eyes gleaming like those of a hound on the scent of a deer.

"A white lie, — that's all," said Gouverneur, interposing between his mother and the boy. "Madam, for God's sake, hold your tongue. My lad, we must bundle you out, neck and heels. Tell your mistress not to send here again." I saw Gov.'s hand on the boy's collar; I heard him shut the front-door, the "bundling out" process being completed. Good Heavens! how they were all looking at me! Every eye but that of George Berkeley, who had stood throughout the whole a calm and apparently indifferent spectator, was fastened on my face. I met every gaze in turn, and in turn was every blood-vessel in my frame racked almost to bursting.

I could endure no more; flesh and blood had withstood its utmost. I rose — staggered forward, — the forms in the room, the tables, the chairs, the mirrors, the pictures and statues, the chimney-piece, and the figure leaning negligently against it, — then, the ceiling, the arch over head, — all went around like a wind-mill before my eyes, and — I fainted away.

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When I came to myself I was in my own room, and Gatty was seated on the bed beside me with a bottle of salts in her hand. She rose to withdraw as I opened my eyes. I detained her.

"O Gatty," I said, "you surely do not believe me guilty of this horrid crime!"

"I am very sorry for you, Mary," she answered, "and so is Gov., — that is all I can say. I would stay with you now, but mother has sent twice for me already." She gave me a look of pity as she left me.

The next six hours I spent entirely alone, — no one came near

me. How could a murderess expect it? The thought that next arose in my mind was, what could I do? what was my next step to be? what were my prospects for the future? It was time I was thinking of it indeed. I was in debt to Judge Ostrander, to the amount of several hundred dollars. It would be more than a year before I could touch a penny of the fortune left me by my father, and the next instalment of the little portion of its interest that was allowed me would not be due in some months. Without a friend to whom I could apply, I was in a dilemma that demanded attention, aside from greater woes. In the midst of my meditations three o'clock came, and, soon after, a knock at my door.

It was Mrs. Chauncey. She had just returned from down town, whither she had been to see about the picture, and, sitting down on my little sofa, she gave me a long account of her interview with the painter. I noticed, however, that in the intervals of her narration, she darted several keen glances through her eye-glasses at me. It therefore did not surprise me when she said, that since I had been listening to her so patiently, it was now her turn to listen to me, and she inquired my prospects for the future. I said that I had no settled intention beyond that of leaving the house that very day.

Mrs. Chauncey replied, that Mrs. Berkeley would not suffer me to go without protection, — the General's ward could not be permitted to leave the house in that style. I said, no matter, — go I would. Rather than remain there, I would starve in the streets.

Mrs. Chauncey elevated her eyebrows slightly on this declaration, and, after remarking that she had heard before young ladies talk about starving, she invited me to make her house my home until I had decided on my plan of action. She was going home to Spuytenduyvil in the morning. I might go, then, with her if I chose. For my sake she would take the earliest train, and leave the house before any one had risen.

I remembered that she was not present when the boy brought back the bill from Madam Follet's; and perceiving that no one had told her of the incident, I thought it advisable to say nothing about it. I felt deeply grateful for her kindness, and attempted to express my sense of it, but the dear old lady would not hear a word. She bade me get all my clothes together, and pack those of my trunks that I had not already in order. As none of them were ready, I was busied for the next three hours with the melancholy task of preparing for my departure.

It was six o'clock — the dinner hour. Reynolds came up to summon me. I declined going down, and, presently, one of the servant girls came to the door with a plate upon which were some viands, accompanied by the message from Jack that it was for me.

I refused it, telling the girl to take it back. I was hungry enough, to be sure; but I had determined never to touch a crust under Mrs. Berkeley's roof again.

"So Mr. Gov. is not in," I said to the departing servant, on learning that I was indebted to Jack for the offer of my share of a dinner at which I could not appear.

"No, Miss Mary, he is out of town till to-morrow."

I was disappointed, as I had intended bidding him a special farewell. At seven o'clock my trunks were packed, and all my preparations for leaving were complete. It grew darker and darker. I was still alone, and was hungry, faint, and weary. I sat down by the window. I had scarcely strength to raise the sash, but having succeeded in the effort, looked down into the darkened street. I remembered how one night, the previous winter, I had watched here for Dan's return; and I recalled the wish that he had uttered that very night, and how it had been realized. The carriage stopped before the door, and stood there waiting many minutes. Soon after, a figure approached down the sidewalk, and came up the doorstep with a heavy, weary tread. It was George Berkeley.

I closed the blinds and lit the gas. Fifteen minutes, which seemed interminably long, went by. I went out in the corridor, and leaned over the balusters. I heard voices in the hall below, and could see figures moving about. I heard Mrs. Berkeley delivering a message to some one in Albany. The lieutenant's reply I could not catch, but I next saw the gleam of his buttons as he ascended the stairs. I went back into my own room. He could not be coming up to this floor surely! I changed my seat from the bed to the sofa, from the sofa to a chair near the window. His footstep was on the staircase — in the hall outside. I went to the door and threw it open, as he came to the threshold.

The composure manifested that morning in his manner was still apparent, nor was it contradicted by any agitation in his tone, as he announced that he had come to take leave of me before his departure to Albany. I said that I wished him a pleasant journey.

He answered by asking that same last favor which he had de-

nied me a few hours before. "Do not refuse me," he said. "I swear it shall be sacred."

"No," said I. "It is too much like the act of Judas."

What a look he gave me! In the anguish which I never before had seen portrayed on that countenance, I traced a strong likeness to Dan Berkeley, which brought back to my mind so vividly the remembrance of that unfortunate brother, that the bitterness of my anger was subdued. I gave him my hand, saying: "Well, for the sake of the dead, I grant it, but part from me quickly, for — I suffer."

"And am I," answered Berkeley, "on a bed of roses."

Surprised by the allusion, I looked up once more. Drops of sweat were standing on his forehead and temples; the expression of suffering grew stronger on his features, and it became them well; I felt the veins throbbing in the arms that encircled me, and the violent pulsations of the heart against which my bosom rested; his scorching breath was on my cheek, and agony unspeakable deepened in his eye. In that moment he was so strikingly, aye, so awfully like to Dan, that I *almost* forgave him.

"Think of me, sometimes, George," I said.

"Yes, God knows always! I *must* think of you, even in my grave. O Mary! my own lost love, — farewell forever!"

He kissed me, and he left me. I closed the door, staggered back to my bed, and sank upon it. I heard his step retreating down the stairway, and, in a few minutes, the sound of the carriage-wheels rolling away from the door. He had gone, then, forever. I was alone, by him, by all mankind, by God himself, forsaken.

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I dreamed of two voices. One said, "My daughter," and one said, "Little sister," and it seemed that the spirits of my father and Dan were near. And my mother — O God! where in all the wide universe was the being whose love should support me in this hour of anguish? I prayed that her presence might now fill the great void, — supply the inexpressible yearning which all my life had been unsatisfied. I moaned: "O mamma, come back to me; you have left me for these long and cruel years, — come back! I have erred, but you will not desert me; I have been wilful, but *you* can forgive me! Take me away with you, — let me rest in your quiet grave, my arms around your loving neck!" Would no answering vision cross the delirium of this mad hope? Might I not behold the tender watching of a face made glorious by a love infallible? Might I not listen

to the music of a voice that should say, in accents sweeter than a seraph's song, "My child!" — I looked up at the wild lights in the heavens, and heard the whistle of the Albany train as it went out of the city, the sound dying mournfully away in the distance. I woke to the reality, — poor deserted Mary, — and I longed that I might leave her too.

Then the spectre rose. It came like the withering blast of a simoom from the infernal world. It was my sin! I saw it before me in all its height and breadth and depth, — in all its blackness, baseness, and enormity; — tearing, scorching, scathing brain and soul and senses. My sin! my sin! my sin! mine only — mine entirely — there was no avoiding it — no escaping it — no surmounting it. It clung to my skirts — it cried in my ears — it gnawed at my heart, — its bulk enormous — its burden insupportable. My soul was imbued with my neighbor's blood! I had been false to every duty to which I owed allegiance as a woman and a Christian. I had forgotten my father's dying charge — my mother's sacred name! I had forgotten the grave at Los Angeles, and the sepulchre in England! I had forgotten the very instinct of humanity, and the divine decree! I had forgotten the law on Sinai, and the cross on Mount Calvary. My soul was scourged by remorse till it almost died.

It was done — it was done — it could never be undone. Unchangeable — immovable — irrevocable — it blotted the past — it filled the future! I lifted my eyes to the hills, but there came no help. I called from the deeps, but my voice was not heard. I was in the great water-floods, and I went down — down — till all was darkness — woe — stagnation.

PART VI.

Mrs. Chauncey's knock sounded at my door as the day, breaking into my chamber, heralded the approach of the hour fixed for my departure.

The final preparations did not occupy many minutes. They were made while Mrs. Chauncey was taking her chocolate in the dining-room. I went to Livy's room, and, calling her gently, gave her a note for Gov. Berkeley, and a ten-dollar note for Gatty (borrowed of Mrs. Chauncey), then bade her good-by. In the library I stopped to take a last look at Dan's portrait, which I could discern with difficulty in the dusk of the early hour; after which I joined Mrs. Chauncey. Then, for the last time, I passed along the broad hall and through the massive doors. When they closed behind me, my heart was lightened of a heavy burden.

A ride through the fresh morning air, much shorter than I had anticipated, brought us to Spuytenduyvil. Mrs. Chauncey owned a pretty cottage, situated at a short distance from the Hudson river. The rooms were quite spacious; on the first floor were two parlors and a small entry on the eastern side, communicating directly with the road; while, owing to the situation of the house on a side hill, the little western piazza was supported on pillars that rose immediately before the basement doors.

After breakfast, we sat down to discuss my plans at leisure; in this discussion, the only definite conclusion arrived at was that an attempt should be made within the week of altering or modifying, if possible, the terms of my father's will. If the whole of my income could be placed at my disposal, I should, of course, feel sufficiently independent.

The following day was Sunday. It passed quietly. I went down to church with Mrs. Chauncey, and as I knew no one in Spuytenduyvil, was spared the necessity of stopping to interchange greetings after service. The next morning, I was told

that a lady was waiting in the parlor to see me, and, on entering that apartment, was not a little surprised to behold Mrs. Brancton. I told her the whole story, with a part of which she was already acquainted; and she then made a revelation which astonished me so much at first, that I could scarcely give it credit. I discovered that Hinda's art was indeed unfathomable.

"How did you suppose," cried Mrs. Brancton, "that the gipsey discovered your residence at General Berkeley's?" Miss Wriothesley told her, — the whole plan was laid on the very morning that you were last there."

She went on to inform me, that Madam Follet had betrayed my visit to Hinda, and had told her that I was expected to call that very day for the powder. Hinda's fertile brain at once conceived an expedient for making my weapon recoil upon myself. She bought some arsenic at a druggist's, and prepared these papers with her own hands. She had an antidote ready, to be taken in case I should fail in the quantity; and otherwise, was well aware that she should be safe, as she was sure to recover from the effects of an overdose of the poison. If I had paid five shillings exactly, in silver, it was arranged that Madam Follet should find a bad quarter, or a ten-cent piece in the money, and send it up to General Berkeley's in the morning. The circumstance of the bill's being perfectly good did not derange in the least, the success of her plan.

Hinda had actually risked her life for the sake of breaking my engagement! It was almost incredible, and I could scarcely believe it, until Mrs. Brancton adduced proofs that convinced me. She owned, that she had been very incautious in telling the gipsey who was to call for the powder; but Madam Follet knew some important secrets of hers, and nothing could be managed without her. Mrs. Brancton assured me that she had taken a strong dislike to Hinda, and acquainted me with her intention of informing Ramsay Jones, on his return to town, of the whole affair. She made me promise to say nothing about it, since she did not wish the fact of her staying with Madam Follet to be publicly known. I promised readily. What good would the mentioning of it do to me with any one? No one, who did not know Hinda thoroughly as I did, would believe that she had consented to swallow so dangerous a dose for any earthly consideration. *I* believed it, — I could see her doing up the papers. Beside, how could I palliate the sin which I could not deny, of having been willing to administer any thing whatever to her?

Mrs. Brancton occupied the next hour or more in talking

about her lawsuit. She was very sanguine of success, and did her best to convince me of the justice of her cause. I became quite interested, and thought she had been unfairly condemned by the world. At last she went away, I accompanying her to the door of the carriage; and, though she was too deeply engaged to come again very soon, she promised that I should see her as soon as the suit was decided, which would probably be in the course of the ensuing fortnight.

The next morning, as I was preparing to go out with Mrs. Chauncey, we were surprised by a visit from Livy Schermerhorn. Mrs. Chauncey's business would not admit of delay, therefore, after some kind inquiries about Livy's cough, she left us to entertain each other, and departed.

I took Livy out on the little piazza that overlooked the river, and she commented on my good looks and bright appearance, which my late troubles did not seem to have affected in the least. I told her that I had never felt better in my life, — that I thought it best to shake off the weight that oppressed me, instead of hugging it to my bosom; I did not intend to be a stridken sufferer all my days.

Livy sighed, and in a few minutes she asked if I would not like to know how the lieutenant was.

"I should not have inquired about him, voluntarily," I answered; "but now that you mention him, I may say that I trust he is alive and in good spirits."

Livy replied, that she should judge otherwise from what she had heard. Yesterday afternoon she had met a lady, who informed her that she had taken a night train on Friday with her brother to Poughkeepsie, in answer to a subpœna. The cars were quite crowded, and she had noticed a gentleman in a military overcoat two seats ahead of her, in a recumbent position, his head against the blinds, the collar of his coat turned up to shield his features, his cap slouched, and his arm over the back of the seat. He had retained this position all the way, — positively, he had not stirred to surrender his ticket — the conductor pulled it out of his button-hole. The lady was marvellously shocked, on leaving the cars, to discover that this inanimate specimen of humanity was Lieutenant Berkeley.

"She might well have been shocked," I remarked, "at his occupying a whole seat if the car was crowded. He must have been asleep, — and I think she might have discovered who he was, before noting all the minutiæ."

Livy changed the subject, and after some desultory conversa-

tion inquired kindly into the state of my finances. "You must want money, dear Mary," she said; "I have come up to-day, unknown to any of the family at home, on purpose to bring you some. I am sure you stand in need of it."

I could not deny that I had scarcely any, with no present prospect of getting any more. I knew that Livy had a very slender income, and was sure that she could not offer me relief to any extent that would not embarrass her, without materially aiding me. I was, therefore, on the point of declining the offer, when Livy astonished me by placing in my hand notes and cheques for five hundred dollars.

"Where in the world," I cried, "did you get this?"

"Oh, I have money," answered Livy, looking very wise; and she went on to express her friendship for me, and assure me that she was in no haste to be repaid, — that, in fact, if I never returned it, it was of no consequence, *et cetera*.

"In other words," I said, quietly, "Mr. George Berkeley gives me this money."

"What an idea!" exclaimed Livy, but with a disconcerted look that confirmed my suspicion.

"But I am right!" said I.

Livy shook her head gravely, and said she had promised not to tell, but if I did not want the money she would take it back. I insisted on being told the whole, and, having exerted all the effective arguments at my command, succeeded in gaining the desired admission. She proceeded to inform me, that George had returned from Albany the night before quite unexpectedly; she stated that his manner was nearly the same as usual, except that it had exhibited a reckless gayety which seemed far from natural, and she declared that his countenance was as worn and haggard as though he had just recovered from a three months' fever. She was busy quite late in the parlor, and as she was going to bed, following the example of the rest of the family, Berkeley reëntered the apartment, requesting her to stay and talk to him awhile. After some preliminary conversation, he said that he supposed Miss Brandegee left on Saturday morning. Livy said "yes," and, as she saw very plainly what he intended should be the subject of conversation, she did not discourage it. She acknowledged to him that she was sure I had no money with me, and she did not know how I was going to get along. She admitted that I had expended on my wedding-clothes more than I had, and she was sure I was in debt. I chid her at this, but she had said that he had asked her direct questions,

and she was under no promise to me to refuse to reply. Then he asked her to come up the next morning and see me, and decided to send Germain down to the bank to cash a cheque before she went. At Livy's suggestion, he had written the cheque, but, as soon as she saw that it was for a thousand dollars, she said immediately, that Mary would know at once it was not hers, for she had so little money. Berkeley then decided to reduce it to a lower figure, and asked Livy if she could not possibly lead Miss Brandegee to believe that it was in her power to lend her the sum of five hundred dollars. Livy said she would try, — perhaps if Mary greatly needed the money she would not ask many questions. Thereupon he decided to leave it to her ingenuity. Then she asked him, if he thought it would be exactly honorable to make Mary take his money unconsciously, after all that had transpired. He replied to this that it was Dan's money, — and from Dan Miss Brandegee might have taken it without any hesitation.

"A fine opinion he must have of my self-respect!" said I. "Dan's money! It is no more Dan's now, than it is his great grandfather's. I look upon it as a gross insult to my misfortunes. George Berkeley must have known that I would not be deceived by the offer of such a sum from you."

"You won't take it, Mary?"

"Take it!" I repeated; "no, to quote Mrs. Berkeley: 'you may sink me dead,' before I touch a farthing of it." I went into the parlor, enclosed the money in an envelope, and, writing simply on the inside: "*Thy money perrish with thee!*" I directed it to Mr. G. L. Berkeley, and gave it, with a feeling of absolute triumph, to Livy.

"Mary, I think you are awful!" she said, when she glanced at the sentence I had penned. "I will take back the money, but I will not be the bearer of such a message as that!"

"Then I shall send it by mail, as I have no footman, and it may be lost," I answered. "Here," and I dropped some hot sealing-wax on the envelope, "I only ask you to take this note according to its direction, — you need not know what is inside. He will probably never repeat the insult, but I will make sure of it."

"I have cut loose from the Berkeleys entirely," I said, as she rose with much gravity of demeanor. "It is not pleasant to lose the esteem of those I admire, but having lost it undeservedly, I shall make no attempt to regain it. In fact, it would be a Herculean task. I wish none of them any ill, only, hereafter, I am as independent of them as they are of me."

It was evident enough that Livy did not approve the spirit of my speech. She made but little answer, and took her departure before Mrs. Chauncey's return. It was, no doubt, very wicked in me, but I did feel an actual delight at the thought of the wound which my uncivil rejection of his disguised offer would inflict on Mr. George Berkeley.

But there were many causes of dissatisfaction and anxiety, which more than counterbalanced the temporary gratification afforded me by these reflections. I became, day by day, more keenly aware of the difference which the events of the past week had made in my circumstances, notwithstanding the kindness of Mrs. Chauncey, who ignored it as far as possible in her manners toward me. I knew that the suspicions to which I had been subjected, though ill-defined, were on that account no less derogatory. I felt instinctively that I was shunned, for though it is natural to humanity to dread the first meeting with one who suffers immediately after misfortune, yet, sensitive as I was, I attributed it to the horror which a woman so wicked as I might naturally inspire, that none of Mrs. Chauncey's friends and relatives, who were on the most intimate terms with her, appeared in the house after the event of my reception. Davis had called Monday morning, but he only stayed a few minutes, and saw Mrs. Chauncey alone in the library. Louis Ostrander was there soon after Livy's visit. I saw him, to speak about my father's will. Mr. Ostrander glanced over the copy of the document which I handed him, informed me somewhat coolly that it was impossible to *alter* the terms of any will to suit the wishes of the heirs, and was sure that any other lawyer in the city would tell me the same.

I was depressed much by this circumstance, and after devoting some time to tears which I could not repress in consideration of my woes, I went to my room to take a few hours of rest, hoping that my utter weariness of soul and body would bring by force the sleep which had not visited my pillow during the long night before. Visions came to me in my slumbers. I seemed to be travelling on a long journey. I passed over hills and mountains, — through streams and marshes, — across valleys and plains. A heavy mist moving before me obscured the way except for a few feet in advance, so that I was one moment suddenly lost in a forest, and the next exposed as unexpectedly to the hot sun on a highway. Directly before my eyes was a cup, in which were the dregs of a black liquid that, as I went on, were rising steadily toward the rim of the vessel, the distance gradually lessening

between it and my lips. I came to the foot of a long, steep hill, and with weary steps strove to ascend, — that cup was at my lips, — they were pressed by its edge. I strove to turn aside my head, but there was no averting the bitter contents of that dreaded vessel. Fate said, "Drink!" and as my feet failed me, I sank down on my knees and groaned, "I will drink it."

A strong arm raised me, — a firm hand took the cup from my lips; and, as I looked up in wonder, I saw it drained to the dregs — not a single drop remained for me to swallow. Who was it? The features were but indistinctly visible. It was as though a phantom stood beside me. I struggled vainly for a ray of light — turned over and awoke. Mrs. Chauncey's young waitress stood by my side, and the words with which she had aroused me were confused in my brain. "What is it?" I asked. "A gentleman downstairs in the parlor, Miss Mary, to see you."

"Where is your mistress?"

"Gone to New York this afternoon, since you lay down. She said tea was to be ready against her return."

I rose. On my dressing-table lay the gentleman's card, and my eye fell on the name of "Lionel Hervey."

I was surprised. Of course, it must have been business only that had brought Lionel Hervey here, and I felt some curiosity as to how he would behave toward an afflicted maiden like myself. Mr. Hervey would certainly not imagine that I was undergoing any great degree of suffering from my appearance, for I felt, as I glanced in the mirror, that I never had looked handsomer, nor happier, in my life. I wasted no time in admiring myself, however, but hastened below to the parlor.

The casements were standing open, and winged insects in every variety were flying in around the large lamp which, under its pretty decorated shade, shed a light over the books and papers on Mrs. Chauncey's centre-table. The folding-doors, forming a communication between the two elegant little apartments, were rolled back, and a very grateful breeze was thus created by the windows north and south, for that September retained all the heat of the late summer. Lionel Hervey, in an undress uniform, was seated by the table; and, as he rose to return my salutation, I was forcibly struck by the elegance of his figure and the grace of his manner, in which, so often had I heard it denounced as negative, I never expected to distinguish any positive charm. I may be excused for giving, at full length, a conversation which has been remembered by me with more interest than I could have imagined at the time.

I took a chair at no great distance from him, and having inquired after the health of his mother and sisters, did not know what else to say. I therefore manufactured a conversation that lasted for some little time, of which his part was much the less spirited, and I could not help noticing that, in the midst of the eulogiums which I was pronouncing on the scenery of the Hudson, his eye reverted pensively to my face, as though in unconscious wonder, not so much at what I was saying, as at the fact that I was able to say any thing at all.

"I regret," I observed at last, "that Mrs. Chauncey is not at home, but I expect her in the course of an hour, or perhaps less."

"I came to see *you*," answered Hervey, "and am not by any means sorry that she is not at home."

It was now my turn to wonder. I was completely silenced.

For a few minutes there was quite an awkward pause. Then Mr. Hervey inquired if I intended to remain there long.

I answered, that I was utterly undecided as to that, — that my prospects had altered very materially since I had last seen him.

Hervey bowed slightly at this, and after remaining some minutes lost in thought, he rose and walked up and down the apartment. I watched him in silence, still wondering that a man, between whom and myself no mutual attraction had existed, should have paid me such a peculiar attention. What could have brought him here this night? From these considerations I was distracted, when Hervey again addressed me, and in such a manner as still further to increase my surprise. With scarcely any attempt at apology for alluding to a subject which, of necessity, must be painful to me, he expatiated for a few minutes on the fact, that my projected alliance with a family of the highest position and respectability had been suddenly broken off under circumstances highly disadvantageous to me; that, under a year or more, I was positively prohibited from the possession of my own property, — that I was dependent on my own resources which were, for the present, very limited indeed, — that I was entirely without protection, and thrown on the world which was left to suspect what it pleased, and decide what it might, on the motive that actuated me to leave a family which, if it said nothing against me, still refused to utter a single syllable in extenuation of my conduct.

It was all true, and I said so. Hervey continued. There was a gentleman who, he said, had for a long time taken a deep interest in my fate. In my happiness, no one had rejoiced more sin-

cerely than he. For my misfortune, no one could offer me truer sympathy. This gentleman, wishing to be regarded as the most disinterested of men, not to say the most remarkable of human beings, offered to Miss Brandegee the entire devotion of a friend, all the assistance that his ability could command, and the affection of a brother.

To this I replied, that I had not so many friends as to make it advisable to reject an offer of this sort without weighing it duly. Of course, I should be happy to feel that I had a counsellor, to whom I might resort at any time when in trouble, which was quite apt to be the case. The gentleman was very kind and obliging. For any assistance in my present circumstances, I should feel extremely grateful, but I feared that *no* friend, however untiring in his efforts he might be, could give me back what I had lost.

Hervey inquired what I should include in the restoration.

I answered, that I should include, in the first place, my position among my former associates, — complete vindication from suspicions which were all the more derogatory from being unexplained by those who harbored them; and the privilege of an independence which was unjustly withheld from me.

"These expectations are quite moderate," said Hervey. "It will be in the power of your friend to fulfil them all."

The lurking sarcasm in his words did not escape my ear. I replied, in the same tone, that I was glad to learn that it was so possible for any one to serve me so extensively.

"But then, Miss Brandegee," Hervey continued, "you will recollect, that it will be necessary for you to go through the marriage ceremony with this gentleman in order to right these numerous wrongs."

These words aroused my attention. I turned to look directly at my interlocutor, and the discovery that, calm as was his manner, the gleam in his eye denoted internal excitement, led to the instant question: "Do you mean all this, or are you jesting?"

"Extraordinary as you may consider the proposal, Miss Brandegee, it would be still more extraordinary were it made in jest."

"The gentleman has authorized you to answer for him in so serious a matter!" I exclaimed.

"The gentleman being I, myself," responded Hervey, "I am invested with full powers."

The past few seconds had prepared me for this announcement. I did not listen to it unmoved. I turned away, covered my face with my hands, and sat trembling like an aspen leaf, while I contemplated the aspect of the new temptation thus unexpectedly

presenting itself before me. In the first place, the good offices to which I had alluded in a spirit half flippant, half bitter, I saw would be done by such a step. Married to Lionel Hervey, I should be restored to a position as respectable, if not as enviable, as that which I had foregone. The suspicions to which I had been subjected would be refuted beyond a question, as, from Hervey's intimacy with the Berkeley family, every one would suppose that he married me in the full knowledge of their injustice; and, indeed, it might be thought that my affection for him had been the cause of the dissolution of my previous engagement. Of course, as my husband, he could act for me where I could not assist myself in the affair of the will; and last, though not least, being fully resolved never to marry George Berkeley, I felt that my immediate union with a man of Lionel Hervey's high character would crush his haughty spirit to the very dust.

My eyes were suffused by the bewilderment of these various considerations. There were still objections, which I proceeded to advance.

"A marriage is a marriage," I remarked. "Should you ever desire to withdraw your brotherly protection, it could not be done without injury to both."

"I shall not withdraw," replied Hervey, "and, for your own consolation, you may remember that, should you become dissatisfied, there are means by which you can dissolve the bond."

During the next few minutes that I sat in indecision, Hervey stood before me apparently unmoved. If he suffered any thing from suspense, he did not manifest it in the slightest degree. In the midst of my embarrassed doubts, Mrs. Chauncey returned. She greeted Hervey cordially, and as tea was just ready, invited him to join us at the table. Wharton Davis had ridden home with her, but he would not come in.

I was silent and preoccupied all tea-time. Mrs. Chauncey and Hervey kept up the whole of the conversation, she occasionally remarking on my silence and absence of mind. Shortly after our return to the parlor, Hervey rose, and as he was bidding Mrs. Chauncey good-evening, I passed into the little entry which led to the eastern door, and he followed in another moment.

"I accept your proposal," I hastened to say, for Mrs. Chauncey was calling for me on the balcony rather impatiently.

"Very well, I will see you in the morning," he answered, with a quiet bow, and was gone.

I was so fluttered in spirits that I could scarcely reply [redacted]

herently to Mrs. Chauncey's questions. Lionel Hervey! what would I have said one year ago had any one prophesied that I would be consenting to marry him at this especial juncture? As my mind was thus distracted from the consideration of my principal trouble, my slumbers that night were far more peaceful than they had been since I left New York; and the next morning I arose early, my thoughts full of my new engagement. After breakfast, Mrs. Chauncey invited me to join her in her morning walk, and looked at me in some surprise, as I stammered out some silly excuses for my refusal. She set out alone, and I took my sewing to the parlor to await the coming of Mr. Hervey.

I regret from my inmost soul that the true — the strong — the all-powerful reason that actuated me to accept Hervey's offer (and deeply ashamed am I to acknowledge so mean a motive), was that I might cause unhappiness to George Berkeley, and punish him, in some measure, for the suffering he had inflicted upon me. It was very mean, but so it was, — and as I sat wondering if Hervey had fathomed my character, — if he had read my purpose, — the thought flashed across me that I would be guilty of the utmost dishonesty toward him, if I suffered him to marry me in ignorance of it. He could not love me, there was no sign of it in the cool, business-like transaction of last night. So much the more reason then, said conscience, that he should be treated with candor. I resolved to acquaint him this morning with the truth, and was happy in the resolution. Should he withdraw his proposal, why, so be it.

In the midst of these considerations, I saw him advancing on the path from the depôt. I bowed to him from the window, and coming up the steps upon the balcony which looked toward the river, he entered by the glass door.

He sat down in the window opposite me, and remarked upon the beauty of the view, from which we soon proceeded to a discussion of the morning's news. I acknowledged my interest in Mr. Breckenridge, wherein he agreed, and observed, that Douglass went about too much canvassing for himself. When the approaching election had been duly discussed, Mr. Hervey told me that, presuming on my last night's decision, he had brought for my acceptance a ring as the token of my engagement.

I rose and took the ring from his hand with great discomposure. It was more splendid than any I had ever worn, to say the least. My first sensation was one of sorrow that it was so handsome. I knew that expenditures in proportion would be en-

tirely beyond Hervey's means. But more than all, it reminded me of the simple little gem which had been the pledge of my late unfortunate attachment. I laid the flashing circle on the table. In this case it seemed like the sale of a feeling which should be deep as life itself; and I sat down entirely unnerved, and burst into tears. I could not at once control myself; and Hervey, after sitting for some time patient and collected, at last made a remark to the effect that he trusted I would remember that the engagement was as much in my own power as the marriage would be; and then he rose, and took his hat from the table.

"Mr. Hervey!" I exclaimed, looking up with emotion, which I fear was only too visibly portrayed on my flushed and suffering features, "do you know what you are marrying?"

He laughed, and answered that he thought he did.

"Then I have to tell you that you do *not* know, — that you have yet to know," I cried. "Are you in a hurry to go?"

His countenance changed at these words.

"I can stay as long as you desire it," he said, and he resumed his seat immediately.

Then I told him. I poured forth the whole story. My weakness — my indiscretions — my jealousies, my scrapes — were all rehearsed from beginning to end. I commenced with my early school deceptions, — went on to my first acquaintance with Dan, — recounted all the grave errors of my conduct regarding him, — all the wild frolics during that first summer in Virginia, by which I had been so greatly compromised, — until I had checked myself midway. I proceeded then to the history of the winter past. I told him of the trouble about Hinda's correspondence, in which I had been involved, — how I had gone to meet Ramsay Jones in Jersey City, — of my encounter with Dan at the Seven Horns, and my first meeting with his brother George. I then came to the little picture, with its diamond setting, and how the slaves had suffered for my sake.

So far, I had gone on breathlessly without stopping. The expression on the face of my auditor I could not see, — he had drawn down his cap over his forehead, and that and his hand concealed his features from view. Up to this point we had maintained the same distant position, — I by the table, he, six feet removed, at the window. Now, however, that I was approaching the great points of my confession, I must be nearer to the humanity that heard me. The agony of words was driv

ing me into an agony of action. I rose and threw myself on my knees beside Lionel Hervey, and clasping his unresisting, passive hand in mine, I told the rest, — how I had pledged my jewels to obtain money (he was present when I had denied it at Mrs. Berkeley's dinner-table), then how Berkeley had in consequence manifested a coldness toward me which I knew to be feigned, yet feared to be real, — how he had devoted himself to Hinda, — and how I, driven to despair, had perpetrated that last mad act of folly from the consequences of which I suffered now. I stopped, and drew a long breath.

"Is this all?" said Hervey.

"There is one thing more," I said. "I confess that I marry you now, that I accept your offer, for the sole sake of wounding George Berkeley's pride, and punishing him for his treatment of me, so far as it lies in my power. I confess that my nature has fallen so low as to be entirely engrossed by the spirit of revenge. It is wrong, but it is the truth; I cannot alter it. Now, Mr. Hervey, that you know all, — now that you see of what I have been capable, — you may wish to withdraw your proposal."

It was a relief to hear him speak at last. He said that in regard to what I had just told him, much of it he already knew from his own observation, — much more he had suspected. He had been unaware of the cause of the dissolution of my engagement. He had been informed of the fact on Monday evening by Davis, who (as well as all the Ostranders excepting Eleanor) was quite in ignorance of the reason.

"And your proposal to me, Mr. Hervey?"

"Remains unaltered as far as I am concerned."

"Thank heaven that I told you," was my thought.

He now asked me to name the wedding-day. He trusted I would appoint some time within the week. He was to leave on Friday morning for Washington, but could defer it till Saturday.

"We will be married Friday morning, then, if you choose," said I. "May I go with you to Washington?"

"Certainly. You have no superstition about the day?"

"None whatever," I answered.

He said he would meet me and Mrs. Chauncey on Friday morning in the city. The next day was Thursday, and on Thursday evening I would see him again. As he was about to depart, I asked him if he loved me.

"Should I say yes, you might repent of your decision," said he.

I said I would not; I preferred honest dealing.

"Well, I do, — a little, of course," he said, with a laugh, and bade me good-morning.

I stood in the window, concealed by the blinds, and looked after him as he moved on down the side-path to the depôt, pondering his last words. Perhaps his idea was that, in the course of time, I might return his affection! If that were his idea, I must disabuse him of it; and I looked forward to the evening of the next day with impatienc. He might not be so sure of his wife, after all. In the mean time Mrs. Chauncey had returned. I told her that Mr. Hervey had been there during the morning, and that we were engaged.

She took off her eye-glasses, rubbed them, put them on again, and looked keenly at me through them, as though she entertained doubts of my sanity. I confess to having felt a little awkward, and sewed away as fast as I could.

"My child," she said at last, "are you quite sure that you *understood* Mr. Hervey?"

I could not help laughing. I said that I was very sure, and I handed her the ring. This was something tangible, — it was evidence incontrovertible. She turned it over, and looked at the stones.

"Yes, hem! — very handsome! I don't wonder you fancy it. Did he show you the ring before he asked you to marry him?"

The grave tone touched me. I laid my arm around her, and replied, "Aunt Messy, how can you insult my misfortunes?"

"Misfortunes, my dear! you make me smile," she rejoined. "This does not prove you very sensible of them."

"But would I marry a man who gave me all the diamonds in the world for their sake alone?"

"Do you mean to say that you marry him for love?" she asked, pointedly.

To this I could not answer. Mrs. Chauncey rose, and walked uneasily about the room, while I still sat, feeling quite disagreeably. At last she observed:

"I seem to be dreaming to-day. It is not a week since you were going to marry my nephew; and now you are going to marry somebody else, and how soon, who can say?"

"Friday next," I answered.

Mrs. Chauncey was still more astonished. She evidently did not know what to say to me.

"You don't mean the day after to-morrow?"

I said I did.

"Well," she observed, "you will be almost as well off as if you married George. I know the Hervey's slightly. It's a Virginian family." (As much as to say it was one of the first in the world.) "Have you made the rest of your arrangements while I was gone this morning? thought of your clothes, cards, and so on?"

I wanted no new clothes, and the cards accordingly came under consideration. Mrs. Chauncey rode down at once with me to order them in New York. All the evening she discoursed with me gravely on the wickedness of marrying one man while I loved another; but I made it so evident that the discussion caused me pain, that she soon dropped the subject.

The evening of the following day Hervey came again. I was down before Mrs. Chauncey, and took occasion to tell him, though with a great deal of embarrassment, that if he thought I would ever return his affection he was mistaken. He answered at once in a manner that appeared perfectly frank and ingenuous, that he had not the slightest idea of the kind. He said, that though he loved me more than he had ever loved any woman in his life, this was the first and last time he would tell me so, — and he wished me to remember, that I would remain always as free and unbiased as at present. He knew perfectly well how utterly impossible it was for him ever to possess any place in affections which had been given to George Berkeley. I thought, while he was speaking thus, that he looked extremely amiable, almost handsome, but my incipient admiration was here distracted by the entrance of Mrs. Chauncey.

Hervey had to be congratulated of course; then Mrs. Chauncey produced the cards, and asked him for his visiting list, which he said was never drawn up. She and I then sat down by the centre-table to envelope and direct the cards. There was mine, Miss Brandegee, and on the larger, nothing but "Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Hervey," as, without seeing him, we had not known what reception days to fix. She asked Hervey when he intended to return from Washington. He said that he must remain till the thirtieth, but that I might come back when I chose.

Mrs. Chauncey looked a little astonished. She asked where we were going to live. Hervey said he should stay at the St. Nicholas, and I suppose was about to add, that I might stay where I chose. He did not so far commit himself, however, and it was arranged that I was to come home with him on the thirtieth, and that the words, "St. Nicholas Hotel," and "Tuesdays in October," should be written on the cards.

As this promised to be a lengthy business, it was deferred to be done partly the next morning, and partly after our departure, — the subject under consideration this evening was to be the directions of the envelopes. Mrs. Chauncey wrote several, and the comments which she made embarrassed me terribly. When half-way down her visiting-list, she made a full stop.

"Shall you send cards to the Berkeleys?" she asked.

"They are friends of Mr. Hervey, I suppose," said I, and I pushed an envelope toward him.

"They won't call on Mary, — not a mother's son of them," said Mrs. Chauncey.

"They need not," I answered, "but they are near relatives of my father, though strangers to me, and it is only a proper attention." As Hervey took up the pen to write the directions, Mrs. Chauncey exclaimed:

"Well, I should like to see how George looks when he hears it. I fancy it will touch his Southern blood a little! The idea of your forgetting him so soon! Perhaps he will think you marry Mr. Hervey out of pure revenge."

Hervey's smile was but half repressed, and he cast an inexpressibly arch look at me, as he placed the dot after the name of Berkeley. My gravity, quite overcome by my triumph, gave way entirely. Of course, with that name before my eyes, I ought to have breathed a gentle sigh, but, on the contrary, I gave utterance to a prolonged burst of laughter. Mrs. Chauncey made some remark about the lunatic asylum, and, when the cards were all directed, rang for tea, which was served in the parlor. I now took occasion to bring up the subject of my father's will, informed Mr. Hervey that he would have on hand some ligitation at the outset of his married career, and expressed my earnest wish that the matter should be immediately taken in hand.

Mr. Hervey inquired what were the terms of the will. I informed him that my father had left all his money to me, but until I was of age, I was to have but a small part of the interest. Hervey remarked that he could see no advantage in breaking such a will as that, — if it were broken, the money would go to the Berkeleys. I explained that I only wished it altered. It could be proved that my father had drawn up the will before he went to England, and that Mrs. Berkeley had remarked, that Mary was too young a chit to have the use of all the interest, — it was at her instigation that that clause had been inserted.

"You know nothing of law, I presume?" remarked Hervey.

"Nothing whatever;" I acknowledged.

"Or politics?"

"Or politics," I answered; and perceiving that both my auditors were laughing at me, I forebore to press the subject.

It was past ten when Hervey departed. As, after his quiet "good-evening" to us both, he was passing through the glass door upon the balcony, Mrs. Chauncey said to me, in a tone quite audible to him:

"Go out with your lover, and bid him good-night. I am astonished at you!"

I followed him, but it was merely to ask if he thought the next day would be pleasant. He looked up at the clouds and said that he did not think it would. I could not help feeling that it was a very cold parting between a couple who were to be married the next day. Mrs. Chauncey talked to me a little while after his departure about the marriage, and still asserted that she thought I did wrong in marrying him. I acknowledged frankly, that I did not think there was any love on either side.

"My dear," she answered, "I am an old woman, and I have seen a great deal of the world, and a great many men. Very few gentlemen, I assure you, fancy the idea of marrying a woman who has been engaged to any one else. It is a sentiment which I have heard many incidentally express, — it is often a bar to the union of very superior girls, and, therefore, I am sure that Lionel Hervey must have been very much in love with you before he made you this offer. I thought so yesterday, when you told me of your engagement, and the idea was confirmed when I saw you together to-night. You thought I noticed nothing. I noticed sufficient to assure me, that though you have not one atom of affection for him, he is deeply and unmistakably in love with you."

This was not a very unnatural view of the case. Of the feelings with which I contemplated it, I have now little distinct recollection, except the great wonder when he could have fallen in love with me.

The next morning, Mrs. Chauncey informed me, that after accompanying me and my husband to the depôt, she should ride down to the painter's and order Dan Berkeley's portrait to be sent to me at the St. Nicholas, and another painted for herself. When I had expressed my thanks, we started off together in her carriage to the church, at the door of which Lionel Hervey was to meet us.

It was a wedding under unfavorable auspices; that is, if the circumstances of its taking place on Friday during a pouring rain,

and with the bride in deep black, may be considered as such. We waited in the carriage for Hervey, who arrived a few minutes later than we. Our entrance to the church was effected under the shelter of a huge umbrella. Laud Hervey and his brother-in-law, Mr. Trueman, were there. They, with Mrs. Chauncey, were the only witnesses to the marriage. There was no music — scarcely light, — the pouring rain came so fast against the windows that I could but just hear the voice of the clergyman, though Hervey's sounded distinctly on my ear. I had gone through the solemn ceremony with very much the feeling of a nun, just taking her convent vows; nor, was there any thing to arouse me to the sense of my true position until the clergyman pronounced the words, "those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder," when Lionel Hervey's hand tightened on mine with a pressure which I felt for half an hour after; and as the sentence, "man and wife," rolled over my head, I felt a positive chill run through my veins.

In the church-porch I was congratulated and kissed by my two brothers-in-law and Mrs. Chauncey. I heard Laud Hervey speaking of the evening journals, and Lionel answer, "the morning papers," and was then in the carriage with Mrs. Chauncey and my husband, dashing through the rain to the depôt.

"Rather an inauspicious day for our nuptials!" said Hervey, looking at me with a smile positively sardonic, as the rain came fast against the carriage windows. Mrs. Chauncey observed, that she had no faith in such auspices. I occupied some minutes in bidding her good-by. She had accompanied me into the depôt, and among her parting admonitions was the charge to remember that my lot was assigned, and that my husband was now to be regarded as my best friend, — all of which seemed quite replete with edification to Hervey. She left me sick at heart with apprehension. Now that the final step was taken, the consciousness that I was wholly in his power, was by no means a pleasant one.

This distracting thought engaged me till I was seated beside him in the cars, when, having asked one or two questions relative to my comfortable establishment, Hervey took a newspaper from his pocket and applied himself to its perusal. This was quite encouraging; still, I wished to put a decided barrier between us, and took out my purse with the words: "How much was my ticket?"

"Nothing," answered Hervey, without removing his eyes from the paper.

"But I want to pay you for it," I insisted.

"Not at all," answered Hervey. "When I travel with my sisters we don't make out separate bills. I cannot establish a precedent."

This was ambiguous enough; and, as I found he did not intend to be overruled in the matter, I thought it best to say no more. I bit my lips with vexation; my companion remained deeply engrossed in his newspaper, his face partially averted, and I apparently as far from his thoughts as if I had been at the antipodes.

Of that first week of my married life I remember but little. I hardly saw Lionel at all during my stay in Washington. On the first of October we returned to New York, and took up our residence for the next two months at the St. Nicholas Hotel. On my arrival I found Dan Berkeley's portrait, with which Mrs. Chauncey had presented me, awaiting me in the parlor of the suite of rooms which Hervey had taken. I superintended the hanging of it, and, after seeing it safely placed above the mantel, went to bed in the prospect of my first reception on the morrow. And here I may as well remark before proceeding, that, in the course of those Tuesdays, I received calls from the great majority of the male acquaintances of both Hervey and myself, to whom the cards had been sent. There were, however, very few ladies among the number. Mrs. Ostrander and Eleanor came to see me, and afterward the Judge. Mr. Gouverneur Aram called, and said his wife and daughter-in-law intended to, but it ended with the intention. Miss Bourdléme's father informed me that his daughter was coming, but she never came. Several other gentlemen made the same assurance on the part of their female relatives, which the said ladies never fulfilled. Mr. Trueman told me that I would see his wife very soon, and I expected Mrs. Trueman very naturally, seeing that she was my sister-in-law, but my expectations were vain.

Well, I did not care; that is, I tried to think I did not, but at ten o'clock on the evening of my third reception, as I sat alone in the parlor to think over the day, and reflected that I had received about one lady to ten gentlemen, and those ladies persons who were acquaintances of the deceased Mrs. Brandegee, my adopted mother, and in nowise connected with Mrs. Berkeley, I did feel fearfully depressed in spirits. So far, there had not been a Hamilton, nor a Livingston, nor a Lee on the list. It was evident they did not mean to come. As I sat with what was, I fear, a very gloomy countenance, my husband came in.

"Do you allow cigars in your parlor, Mrs. Hervey?" he said.

It was the first time since our wedding-day that he had called me by any name whatever; on the few occasions when I had met him, he having avoided the necessity of addressing me directly. I authorized the cigar, and he sat down to smoke it. I noticed that he scrutinized me very attentively, and at last he commented on my thin and pale appearance, observing he thought I did not take exercise enough. I acknowledged that I had scarcely been out since my return to town, and confessed the real reason, — namely, that I thought I might possibly meet Lieutenant Berkeley.

"You need have no apprehension on that score," said my husband, "he left two weeks ago for Georgia, and the whole family are shortly to follow to the South."

This news surprised me, but I breathed more freely, and demined to go out without hesitation. There was another subject on which I wished to speak, but it cost me so much perplexity to broach it, that Hervey's cigar was nearly spent before I addressed him. Then I asked him to explain to me how we could dissolve our marriage. Hervey then said, that he feared he had not been sufficiently explicit before the marriage had taken place. A month's or six weeks' residence in the State of Iowa — long enough to give us the rights of citizenship — would be necessary, after which we might gain a divorce on the ground of incompatibility of temper.

"A divorce, Mr. Hervey!" I cried, "I have indeed misunderstood you. It would be making my character appear even worse than it now does among the Berkeleys, for me to be considered as a woman divorced, and on such silly grounds! Incompatibility of temper! How could you, as a churchman, think of such a thing? What a precedent that would be for Christians to establish!"

Hervey laughed. "Why, madam," he answered, "Christians have established worse ones, and as long as our own consciences are void of offence toward God, why should we care how our conduct is regarded by men? When you are ready, we can separate, — I only proposed the easiest way."

"It does not suit me," said I, resolutely. "The marriage must only be dissolved on the ground of our wishes. You can swear to yours, and I to mine; and if the law will not permit us to separate, why then ——"

"We can separate in spite of it."

"I was not going to say that, exactly," I replied.

"You have only to tell me when you are ready, and we will

see what efficacy the swearing, of which you spoke, will have. Until then, however, we may as well keep on as we are."

He threw the stump of his cigar behind the grate, rose, and left the room. At first I thought his conduct highly dishonorable, but after some consideration could not say that it was not what he had told me before our marriage. And had I not told him expressly that I never should desire a dissolution of the union unless he did? My mind soon grew more tranquil on the subject, and in a day or two it scarcely recurred to my thoughts.

On my last reception-day, there was quite a crowd late in the afternoon, and, among others, Mrs. Brancton appeared. I was called upon to congratulate her on the termination of the lawsuit, which was in her favor, after which she took occasion to observe, that she had a great deal to tell me, for which she would take some time when we were quite alone. She begged me to send her a note apprising her when my husband would not be at home. I did not exactly approve the tenor of the speech, but replied that he was away always in the daytime, and she promised to come soon. In the evening, while I was talking with a group of gentlemen, my husband came in with Gouverneur Berkeley. I could not receive him entirely without embarrassment, and it was difficult to keep up a conversation in which I made no inquiry about his mother or sisters. Gov. looked extremely well, and was very kind in his manner to me, yet I felt relieved when he withdrew.

The next day I was out all the morning, and when I came in found lying on my parlor-table a black-edge card. I had a presentiment as to whose it was, even before I read the name, "Miss Berkeley." Gatty, then, had been to see me! I experienced a sensation of pleasure at this unexpected attention, though I could not regret not having been at home.

As I was preparing to go out on the following morning, I was surprised by the appearance of Livy Schermerhorn.

"Oh, she had so much to tell me!" I knew she had, and I pulled her to the sofa, made her take off her bonnet, rang the bell for my maid, and gave my orders about cakes and wine with the sensations of an empress just ascended her throne. Livy poured forth regrets that she had not been on one of my reception days, but the truth was, Mrs. Berkeley had raved so whenever I was talked about, that she did not dare. I inquired (very affectionately, of course,) after Miss Wriothesley's health.

"Hinda! I don't know, dear, — she is not at the Berkeley's; oh, I must begin at the beginning, and tell you about it, with some sort of method."

"You took back Lieutenant Berkeley's money, I suppose, in the first place."

"Yes, I took back the money. He did not get in until the evening, and I did not have a chance to speak to him till after dinner, when I asked him to come to the library, and gave him the envelope. He tore it open and read the inscription. I expected to see him look positively dismayed, but instead of that he appeared supremely amused, and when I asked at what he was smiling, he replied that he had been told there was but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous, and Miss Brandegee had proved it beyond contradiction when she spelled the word perish with two r's."

"Livy, it is impossible!" I almost shrieked, in consternation.

"My dear Mary, there it was in black and white. I was so excited when I read it up at Spuytenduyvil that I did not notice it, but you did spell perish with a superfluous r. 'Quite unfortunate,' he said, 'Miss Brandegee narrowly missed doing something very fine, but she overshot herself decidedly by one letter.'"

I felt quite provoked, and determined that my pen should be guilty of no more such slips as that thereafter. I now begged Livy to go on and complete the narration.

"Well," she continued, "for several days nothing more was said, until the morning after your wedding, as we were all, except George, in the library, Gov. came in and read it out of the paper. Read it just as though he thought it a hoax! None of us thought of believing it. Gov. said that you could not have so little principle. Mrs. Berkeley said she was sure that Lionel Hervey could not be such a jackass, and that in all probability it would be contradicted in the next day's paper. Jack said it was only a shabby fellow that had put it in the paper any way. In the midst of all the discussion, what should arrive but your cards! The package was addressed to Mrs. Berkeley, and when she saw what it contained she fairly shouted with laughter. Well, she declared, you did beat the devil! — out-and-out deviltry she did admire, she must say. But, O Mary, how you were canvassed and criticized and abused! Hinda said she never had said any thing about you before, but she must speak then; she rated you soundly. Mary and Bess declared they thought you were perfectly awful. Jack said he did feel sorry for Lionel Hervey, who was more of a fool than he would have believed. Hinda said she hoped he would not get poisoned, and she nar-

rated how you used to abuse him, and call him a conceited fool a year ago last summer in Virginia; and to think, after all, you had married him! She was perfectly astonished. Then Mrs. Berkeley declared that *she* was not astonished; she was sure that you had not taken lessons of Dan a whole summer for nothing, and she knew Lionel Hervey never would have married you if he had known every thing about you. Well, they kept it up for some time, — all but Gov., who did not open his lips from beginning to end, and Gatty, who said very little. At last George came in.

"As soon as he appeared, there was silence immediately. I believe he was the one of whom we had all thought, though no one had alluded to him. Probably he saw by the looks of the company that something had happened. Mrs. Berkeley said to him briefly: 'Wedding-cards, George, — on the table.' He came forward, — looked at them, and turned them over; I think his hand trembled a little, but I cannot be certain. The first remark was made by him.

"'She was determined to be married within a week, eh?' he said, in a tone quite composed, — almost careless. He listened without comment to all the remarks that were made. They were chiefly commiserative of 'poor Lionel Hervey.' I noticed, at last, that the lieutenant was growing pale; and Mrs. Berkeley, who kept glancing incessantly at him, observed: 'George, you cannot stand it any longer, can you?' He asked if she did not think he stood it very well. *I* thought he did, — I would not have imagined that he was in the least affected by the intelligence. I am not even sure about the change of color. The only observation I heard him make was, that Mr. Hervey was his own master, and Miss Brandegee quite her own mistress. If they chose to be married, it was no affair of his.

"I could not think him so philosophical as he appeared. How he endured all their conversation and chatter for the rest of the morning, I cannot conceive. He went out with Jack, and was gone all day, — did not come in until late in the evening, and then went up to his room and walked the floor till day-light."

"How do you know," I asked.

"Because I heard him, Mary. Neither Hinda or I could sleep all night, — it was a slow, monotonous, steady tread, — and, my dear, the next night it was just as bad, — walk — walk hour after hour, — I really thought he was going insane."

"Perhaps he has trouble that you know nothing of," I suggested.

"O Mary! there can be no mistake about his trouble, though no one ever speaks on the forbidden subject. The second morning, Mrs. Berkeley and I were busy in the library when he came in. He always appears reckless when with her. She began about you, and kept it up for some time, — a woman, she said, who would lie and steal, and poison people, was not worthy so much consideration on his part. She told me, afterward, she talked in that way to cure him of his folly, as she called it. He only asked if that was all she had to say. As she could not very well say what was worse, she contented herself with repeating what she had said already."

"He doubtless found it very entertaining."

"Mary, you will be unjust to him. I cannot believe you ever loved him; I shall talk no more about him."

I mentioned that Miss Berkeley had honored me with a call.

"Oh, yes. Mrs. Berkeley said, that of course everybody would follow her example in calling on you, and she would not do it. Any one of the family that went, she said, she should be much displeased with, but after her trouble with Hinda, she has seemed to relent toward you. Oh, I have not told you about that yet. Shortly after you left, Judith came to town expecting to attend your wedding. The day before George went South, there was quite a fracas. One of Hinda's school-girl acquaintances had a desperate quarrel with her, and sent a great number of her letters to Mrs. Berkeley. She opened the first without knowing what it was, and then read on, I presume, because she *did* know. The letters had been written in confidence, mostly from Virginia, many from New York, and her delineation of Mrs. Berkeley's manners in the household, with the narration of how we all suffered from her temper, was not such as to meet with toleration; Mrs. Berkeley thought it outrageous. There was an awful scene; Hinda was locked up three times, and three times let out, and told to come downstairs. But you can imagine, Mary, how matters were, when I tell you that Mrs. Berkeley, in her very worst mood, kept the whole house subjected to its influence all day long. When the lieutenant came home in the evening and found how matters stood, and that they were getting worse and worse, he sent for a carriage and took Hinda to the Clarendon, to stay with Judith. Mrs. Berkeley thought it a great pity Mary hadn't killed the vixen with the arsenic when she made the attempt. All the while Hinda was making ready she kept calling to George to hurry that little wretch out of the house immediately, — she did not want such a

liar under the roof longer than she could help it. So Hinda kissed me and went, and that is the last we have seen of her."

I could not resist the inhumanity of a smile at this account of Hinda's calamities, and then remarked that I supposed it was owing to that, that I had been noticed by the family.

"Well, I don't know, — Mrs. Berkeley told the girls that they might do as they liked; she thought one of them might call after the receptions, so late that you would not have time to return the call, just to show good feeling, but not to be on the same footing as formerly. Gatty said, at first, she shouldn't; but I think Gov. advised her to go, for she said yesterday, at dinner, that she had been down. Gov. himself said from the very first, that he should go to see you, and we heard that Mrs. Ostrander said she would, just because Mrs. Berkeley wouldn't. But oh, such a time as there has been about you, Mary! Dozens of ladies came to ask us about it; and people at the receptions inquired of Hinda and me, whether they ought to call on Mrs. Lionel Hervey. Five persons have asked me, within the last ten days, why your engagement to the lieutenant was dissolved. Mrs. Berkeley has displayed a great deal of skill in not telling the reason, and yet making it understood that you were in fault."

I mentioned Mrs. Trueman's being in town.

"Why, didn't you know?" said Livy. "All the Herveys are in town. Mrs. Hervey, and Caroline, and Sophia. They are staying with some of their friends in Stuyvesant square. They came up to see Mrs. Berkeley as soon as they arrived, and they said it was outrageous in Lionel to go and marry in that way, — they did not like it at all; they declared they would not call on you, and they would not speak to their brother. As soon as they had gone, Mrs. Berkeley called in Hinda, and charged her not to tell anybody about the arsenic affair, and said, in case her command was not obeyed, Hinda should quit the house. Hinda said she would comply; but after the fracas about the letters, and her departure to stay with Judith, I learn that she went round to Stuyvesant square, and I suspect she told Mrs. Hervey and Mrs. Trueman all about it; for, a few days ago, Mrs. Hervey told Mrs. Berkeley, that she thought you were a very wicked woman, — that Lionel was crazy, and none of the family will have any thing to say to him."

Livy stayed some little time longer, talking over my affairs, saying she supposed she should not see me any more, since they were all going down to Washington for the winter, and if Lincoln were elected, she thought it likely they would retreat to Virginia.

Hervey had invited a party of gentlemen that evening to an oyster-supper in our rooms, and I did not have a chance of speaking to him until long after it broke up. When once more alone with my husband amid the ruins of the feast, I could not resist telling him of Livy's visit, and of the manner in which George Berkeley had received the news of my wedding. Hervey looked somewhat amused, and asked, with a smile, if I had had my quantum of revenge on my ci-devant lover.

I scarcely answered, in my haste to say that I was sorry to learn to-day, for the first time, the whole extent of the sacrifice which he had made for my sake, and that his family were so indignant as to refuse to receive me. If I had foreseen it, I would not have married him. Livy had said that they were all raving.

Hervey replied, that he fancied they were not the only persons who were raving just at present; asking if I was aware that Miss Hinda Wriothesley was married. My astonishment was great, and was increased when Hervey informed me that Hinda had married Mr. Jonas Hunter.

This was quite surprising intelligence. I pictured to myself how angry Judith and the captain must be; and Mrs. Berkeley! beyond a doubt, she now looked upon my character as white, beside Hinda's. I might almost allow myself to abate the heat of my resentment.

Soon after this, I met Mrs. Brancton in the street. She accompanied me back to the hotel to make the revelation which she had promised at my reception. After a few comments on Miss Wriothesley's marriage, by which I learned that it had been quite a grand affair, and that Hinda had cried all through the ceremony, she proceeded to her narration.

"It was a day or two before I left Madam Follet's, my dear," she said,—"but a short time after I saw you at Spuytenduyvil, Madam Follet was out, and had requested me, as usual, to officiate in her place. It was a dull, cold, rainy day, and there had been very few callers during the morning. My suit was coming off the week ensuing, and I was preparing to pay a visit to my lawyer, when the little boy came up to say that there was a gentleman in the parlor to see Madam Follet.

"I felt a little annoyed, being anxious to see my counsel, but, of course, I could not refuse to play Madam Follet, especially as so few had paid their court to her during the day. On coming down, I found, standing at the window, a young gentleman who struck me at first view as extremely handsome, and in the

very turn of whose head was manifested that nameless something which bespeaks an intercourse with the best society. His overcoat was unbuttoned, and by the glimpse of his uniform thus afforded me, I perceived that he was a United States officer. All this I noticed before I recognized the original of that charming little miniature of your lover, that you showed me."

"You do not mean that it was Lieutenant Berkeley?" I cried.

"Yes, my dear Mrs. Hervey, — the second glance confirmed the impression. His resemblance to Dan is very striking, and the tone of his voice almost the exact counterpart of his brother's. My recognition held me dumb for a moment, and he also seemed a little surprised at my appearance, since he had probably expected to behold a decrepid old hag. I soon recovered my self-possession, so far as to call in the little boy to apply a match to the preparations for fire, which were already visible in the grate. Lieutenant Berkeley then observed, that his errand would not detain me until the fire was going; but at once remembering the part I was to play, I answered, with a shake of the head, that it would detain him much longer than he expected. When the coals were fairly blazing, I directed him to a seat before the fire, and then taking another myself, I said, with an air as nonchalant as I could command: 'Well, Mr. Berkeley, in regard to what do you propose to consult my art?'

"He looked at me keenly, on hearing his own name pronounced so decidedly. He probably accounted for it, by thinking that the little boy had aided the conjecture. Anxious to maintain my character of fortune-teller, for the sake of adhering closely to my identity, I added, that the terms were fifty cents for gentlemen, twenty-five for ladies.

"He answered: 'You will ask me more than that, I fancy,' and thereupon took from his pocket-book a paper which he handed, requesting me to name the price of my signature to the same. What do you think it was? A statement that the subscriber had sold no arsenic to any lady within the past month!

"I sat, pretending to ponder it, while trying to think how I could avoid signing the paper. Of course, I dared neither use Madam Follet's name, nor give the real reason for my hesitation. I looked at him with emotions which were truly conflicting; and, in order to gain time, observed: 'Ratsbane, is it, Mr. Berkeley?'

"'Exactly,' said he, 'but the name does not signify. The potion is among your nostrums, I fancy, and you can have no objection to favor me with your signature to so very harmless a document.'

"'Pardon me,' said I. 'It will be impossible for me to sign this paper, as I have sold a couple of powders to a young lady within a month, and received the money with my own hands.'

"He shrugged his shoulders and rose, observing, facetiously: 'I did not ask you *that*. I only requested to know the sum attached to your signature.'

"'In other words, the price of a falsehood,' said I.

"'A very harmless falsehood, madam,' he answered.

"'I can listen to no such sophistry,' I said, rather severely. 'What sum did you propose to offer for my signature?'

"'Any, madam, that you choose to name,' he answered, 'if it lie within the bounds of reason.'

"The unlimited nature of the beginning of the sentence, and the indefinite conclusion, rather puzzled me. 'A thousand dollars?' I suggested.

"'Yes,' — if I would affix my signature, that price should be paid for it without any delay.

"Then, Mrs. Hervey, I was grand. I tossed my head in lofty scorn, and replied: 'Mr. George Berkeley, not a thousand dollars, — nor a hundred thousand, — not all your fortune could buy my signature to a varnished cheat! Take back the lie!' I threw the paper toward him, and it fell on the floor at his feet.

"He bowed with the utmost grace, and saying: 'Madam, your most obedient,' backed toward the door with the air of a courtier leaving an imperial presence. But I did not wish to let him go, and exclaimed, in haste: 'But wait, my dear sir, — you are leaving a paper in your handwriting here upon my rug. Stay a minute. At this rate, we can never come to terms. Allow me to ask, simply through motives of friendly curiosity, if you are anxious for my signature?'

"'You must be quite well aware of that by this time,' said he. 'But, sir,' I continued, 'are you going away without having your fortune told? He answered, with a tinge of bitterness in his tone, 'God knows that my fortune is being told fast enough at present,' — and he added, with another bow, 'that as I had refused his petition, he would relieve me of his presence.'

"'You have taken up some of my time,' said I, 'and I must remind you of my terms — gentlemen fifty cents.' He hoped I would pardon his forgetfulness, and took half a dollar from his pocket.

"I acted on a sudden impulse, — undoubtedly a rash one. I rushed to the door, struck the money down upon the floor, caught both his hands in mine, and exclaimed, 'O Mr. Berke-

ley, why have you offered me *money* as the price of my signature? Why could you not have appealed to me simply as a gentleman to a lady,—why could you not have asked me to grant this favor, not for the sake of a few paltry dollars, but for your own? How could I have found it in my heart to refuse you?'"

"That, Mrs. Brancton," said I, "he undoubtedly found the highest refinement of flattery. The demonstration must have embarrassed him."

"Embarrassed — what? whom? George Berkeley! My dear Mrs. Hervey, it is impossible to put him out of countenance. Altogether unexpected as was my address, he received it with the utmost composure. He thanked me, — he was forever my debtor, — he could never express his sense of my kindness, far less repay it. I said his thanks were premature. I could not give him the paper copied and signed that day, but I would the next. Then I said I had something to tell him about Miss Brandegee, and made him resume his seat, after which, I unfolded the story as far as I dared. I did not enter very far into the particulars of your visit, or Miss Wriothesley's, and as I could not allow the fact that I was not Madam Follet to escape me, the plot between her and Miss Hinda remained unrevealed. I told him that there were circumstances which I hoped to explain in future, the arsenic mystery among the rest. After some further conversation, I remarked that I thought Miss Brandegee a very sweet girl. 'Indeed, she was a sweet girl,' he replied. I inquired, then, why he did not marry you now. He answered gravely, 'that Miss Brandegee had put it entirely out of his power ever to offer himself again.' I knew of your marriage, but not wishing to tell him that I had received cards, lest he might suspect that I was not Madam Follet, I asked his meaning, and he said that you were married to a brother officer.

"After some further conversation he asked to be allowed to come and see me again. But you see, Mrs. Hervey, my suit was fixed for the next week, and knowing it would never do to have a man dangling after me, I said there were urgent reasons why I must refuse that request till ten days had expired. I said I would rely on his honor that he would make no attempts to see me sooner; that, should we meet in the street he would not recognize me by a look, and I promised to send him the paper duly signed and witnessed the next day. With the understanding, therefore, that he was to hear from me on the morrow, and to speak to me in ten days, he took his departure."

"Did you tell him that you were married, Mrs. Brancton?"

"No, I left that for him to infer by some remarks I let fall. In the course of the hour that he stayed, I felt several times strongly tempted to reveal my identity to him, and had he turned back to say any last word, should have given way to the impulse. I stood at the window screened by the curtain, watching his form through the falling rain till the stretch of sidewalk obscured it, and then, when he reappeared on the opposite corner, only to vanish again. I am sure my interest in him must have puzzled him, as I could not explain it by attributing it to that which I felt in his deceased brother.

"When Madam Follet came home I made her copy and sign the paper without telling her for what it was wanted. I threatened her into a fright about the arsenic, and she wrote it without much parley, but in such a wretched scrawl, I was ashamed to have Berkeley think it mine. I made the waiting boy direct it, and sent it without the name of the witness which I had promised. The next week my suit came off, and the very first day after the impanelling of the jury, whom should I see in the court-room but Lieutenant Berkeley; of course he must have known me, but there was not the slightest gleam of recognition in his eye as it wandered over my features. He left without approaching me. Whether he was present subsequently or not, I do not know, as the court-room was densely crowded, and I thought it unadvisable to look about. But on the last day, after the jury had retired, I was leaving the room, when I met Berkeley talking with Ram. Jones at the door. Jones asked to see me to my carriage, but, as I was displeased with him, I said that Mr. Berkeley would give me his arm. As he aided me into the carriage he said, with a smile: 'When does the ten days' term expire?' I replied, 'to-morrow evening,' and, giving him my address, I bade him bring that important document signed by Madam Follet, when I would add my name as witness. He appeared in my parlor the very next evening among the other guests, and congratulated me on the result of my lawsuit. By my request, he remained, after the others had gone, to sup with me; and I witnessed the paper, with a commendation bestowed on his honor in allowing it to go unattested for so many days, without coming near me, when he must have been dying for the finishing touch to the document."

I said I thought it strange, that as intimately as she had known Dan Berkeley she never had met with George before.

"It would appear so," she answered, "but George has been in

Spain, or in England, or at the South during my winters in New York, and I think he was here with the rest of the family when I knew Dan in Washington. (She referred to the time at which the first divorce-suit came off.) I would like to know George better. He is a fine fellow, and has superior talents. He will make his mark in the world."

"In what line?"

"In any line he chooses. He is at the South now, but is coming back in the course of the winter, when I shall try my fascinations. Would you be jealous?"

"Jealousy of George Berkeley has cost me too much," I replied. "Besides," I added, recollecting that I was married, and something more must be said for the sake of appearances, "there is one now whose place in my heart should be first. You will probably succeed with the lieutenant. Many a heart is caught in the rebound."

"But I began wrong, Mrs. Hervey! A woman who lets a man see his power over her will lose it. I counted on the vanity of youth, and attacked it. I was met by a cool-headed man of the world, one who understood himself and me too. Nevertheless, should he come back I will try again; the *liaison* may flame up afresh."

Mrs. Brancton did not stay much later, and took her departure, after announcing that she had explained to Berkeley the whole affair of the poisoning, and inviting me to call upon her.

I revolved, for some time, the apparent contradiction in her character. I had heard her called wily and politic, but her revelations to me betokened a trait quite the reverse. I pondered also the fact that Berkeley had taken so much pains to procure that certificate from Madam Follet. I was quite sure that he had seen some necessity for it, either in Hinda's behavior, or those rumors which might be afloat respecting mine.

In the evening, when alone with Lionel, I asked if, since his marriage, he had met Lieutenant Berkeley. He answered, "Yes, sometimes." I inquired if he had held much conversation with him.

Hervey said that he had met him one evening in Broadway, and they had gone up to some coffee-house to sup, where they made away, between them, with six cups of coffee, and three or four glasses of something else, not to speak of some burned toast, and villainous Welsh rare-bits, after which they smoked several cigars; and they had talked all the time.

After this piece of information Hervey was silent, and I was

thus obliged to inquire, though reluctantly, what they had talked about.

"During the first course," he answered, "the conversation related chiefly to our prospects of advancement in case of a war with the North, which would be the result of Mr. Lincoln's election. Thence we came upon the chances of a disturbance on the fourth of November, and a discussion of the old Astor-place riots, when Macready was playing in New York."

"He said nothing about me?"

"No, — but I did. He asked if I knew Mrs. Brancton; I replied that my wife was acquainted with her, and he said he knew it."

"Berkeley asked you if you knew Mrs. Brancton?" said I. "What led to that?"

"It's a secret, — will you never tell?"

"Never tell," I echoed.

"Well, after discussing the Astor-place riots in particular, and mob-law in general, we came back again to the original question of a division of the Union; and Berkeley informed me confidentially, that a lady of some influence at Washington, had offered to promote his advancement in the Northern service through means of her own. Making a random shot I named Mrs. Brancton, and on that he asked if I knew her. I said that you had some acquaintance with her, as I have told you."

"How did he look upon her offer, Mr. Hervey? Did he accept it?"

"He regarded it as I should that of a man who would promise me a lot of old pans to establish me in tin-peddling. Berkeley has not the slightest intention of staying in the Northern army. He mentioned Mrs. Brancton's offer incidentally, without comment."

I now proceeded to relate to my husband the particulars of Mrs. Brancton's visit to me on that day. Hervey listened in absolute silence, nor did he speak until I concluded, by asking what he thought of Mrs. Brancton's chances of success in an attack on the heart of Lieutenant Berkeley.

"She cannot know him very well to harbor such an idea," said he; "probably all she cares for, is to have him in her train."

"Is he not very much interested in her?" I asked.

"I will give you his own words," replied Hervey: "After we had left the coffee-house, and were coming up Broadway, I asked him his opinion of Mrs. Brancton, and he replied, that if she

were a man, he should pronounce her a very fast specimen. That is all I recollect on the subject."

"Why have you never mentioned this before, Mr. Hervey?"

"One should never be in haste to carry tales," he answered, "beside, I did not suppose that the subject could be a pleasant one to you."

"How was Berkeley looking, Mr. Hervey?"

"Very well, indeed, — and he took the allusion to you quite calmly."

No more was said; as I asked no further questions, my husband volunteered no further information.

The month following passed in a manner more agreeable. I met my husband at breakfast, and in the evenings at dinner, but he left me entirely to myself in every thing, and I never thought of questioning him with regard to his actions. I went with him several times to parties, and dined at Mrs. Brancton's twice without him; but in my own parlor at the hotel, I saw my liveliest hours. Hervey was by no means of a sombre temper, — in fact, his spirits often carried him to the opposite extreme from his general demeanor, and at our little card-parties and soirées he was the gayest of the gay.

One morning, about a fortnight after the visit from Mrs. Brancton, I left the parlor of my suite of apartments just in time to see Hervey descending the stairs. I was certain that he had been up quite late the night before, for I had seen a light shining from his room after twelve o'clock. Finding the door of that apartment open as I passed it, for the first time I ventured to enter.

It was a room of moderate dimensions, handsomely furnished, and as it had just been put in order, probably looked much better than at any other period of the day. When my eye had scanned its contents, it was next roving over the unfamiliar aspect of cigar-cases, pistols, and swords; but, before I could take in the other various items in the miscellany, my attention was caught by some articles on the table which stood immediately before the fire-place. These were, a little case covered with blue velvet, a pocket-book, a small folded paper, and a larger package. There were other packages and papers on the table, but these lay a little apart; and without pausing to analyze the motives by which I was prompted, I opened first the package, then the little paper, and then examined the pocket-book, in which were three letters loosely tied. The package contained half a dozen camelias, which, once white and fresh, were now faded and

shrunken. In the little paper was a lock of dark hair, and my swimming eyes had recognized on the letters a familiar hand. With trembling fingers I seized the case; and, on opening it, my suspicions were confirmed, as I gazed on the face of Judith Hunter.

Letters from Judith to Lionel Hervey! What, I thought, would Hunter say, if he knew it? The picture had fallen from my hands, and while I still stood bewildered by the table, I perceived, pushed further on, a small morocco-covered case, secured by a steel clasp. What would this contain? I opened it. It was a daguerrotyped likeness of myself.

I looked in astonishment at this discovery, on the unexpected appearance of my own features. Where in the world had Hervey found it? or how could he have obtained it? and, more than all, why did he keep it in this way? Again I examined Judith's miniature. Had Lionel compared them? and to which had he given the preëminence? That hair — it was her's beyond any doubt, — and those provoking letters — they would explain it all. But, of course, I could not read them! Oh, no; but I took them out of the pocket-book and went to the window to look more closely at the directions, stumbling over my husband's boots on the way. There were three only, and just as I had ascertained that fact by counting them half a dozen times over, I heard a step coming through the hall. A step was no unusual sound, — and Lionel Hervey's step at any other time would not have alarmed me, but now it made my heart bound. For one second I was motionless, the next I let fall the letters on the dressing-table, and went behind the curtain.

Hervey walked in directly. He was evidently in a hurry, which I was glad to see, for I was positively on thorns, and I shrank from any discovery of my present concealment. He unlocked a small desk which stood on the table, and threw in the pocket-book, the withered flowers, the lock of hair, and one of the pictures. The other case he shut with a snap, put it in his breast-pocket, locked the desk, and quitted the apartment. An emotion of pleasure shot through my whole frame. That miniature which he had consigned to the safe-keeping of the desk was Judith Hunter's! the one which he had placed next his heart was *mine!* I issued from my concealment, — the letters still lay on the dressing-table where I had left them. How fortunate that he had not seen them. Again I took them up. Inclination whispered to me, "he cares nothing for them, or he would have looked in the pocket-book; a wife may surely read

her husband's letters!" I listened to the evil spirit, opened the letters, and read them.

The first was a short note, couched in the following terms:

"Mr. Lionel Hervey will have the goodness to return the forget-me-nots which he took from Miss Berkeley's bouquet, on the evening of the Light-Guard ball. As Mr. Hervey can care nothing for favors for which he does not take the trouble to ask, Miss Berkeley begs leave to inform him, that not even a leaf from her bouquet can, unsought, be won."

"Quite plain that!" thought I, — "I wonder if Hervey took the hint?" I proceeded with the perusal of the second letter, which was dated the previous winter, shortly before her marriage. I remembered when it was written. It contained an invitation to be one of the bridesmen. The last was a longer one. It was dated the night before her marriage, and the first sentence I distinctly remember: "My dearest Lionel — for the last time may I call you so — when this is placed in your hands I shall be married, and to love you then will be a crime. This accompanies the flowers of my bridal wreath, — keep them until they are withered, — but know that the sentiment with which I give them can never wither, — they are all that my plighted faith, my broken heart, can bestow!" The letter contained allusions to locks of hair, and daguerreotypes exchanged, — to the summer evenings in Virginia, and old times in New York, and days at Saratoga, and concluded with the assertion, that wherever he went, whatever became of him, whose husband soever he might be, he should be blessed by the prayers, and followed by the love of Judith Berkeley.

I laid the letters down with a bitter feeling of regret that I knew their contents. That Judith was possessed of so much heart I had not believed, — that she had placed such implicit confidence in Lionel on the eve of her wedding-day, surprised me. But these considerations were swallowed up completely in the sense of my own meanness. What had possessed me to pry into that correspondence? It was positively wicked. What was now to be done? I could not unlock my husband's desk and replace the documents, for he had carried off the key, and to leave them at the mercy of the chambermaid would never answer. I would have to give them back to him with a confession, — but confessions were so stupid! Still, to make it, was my duty. Again I reflected on the contents of those letters.

All this had been going on before my very eyes the previous winter, and I had been so occupied with Dan and George Berkeley, that I had seen nothing of it, and should have been still more ignorant, had it not been for Hinda's former revelations.

Filled with these reflections, I returned to the parlor, where I found another letter lying on the table. It was for my husband, directed in a lady's hand, and bearing a city post-mark.

I threw it down; it was an unimportant circumstance, but it served further to explain to me the new sensations rising in my heart. Yes, I was jealous — positively jealous, — I was harboring a serpent, by whose means I had already suffered cruelly, — which had warned me of its treachery by its sting. *I loved my husband.* It had stolen over me unconsciously, I was almost ashamed to acknowledge it even to myself. I accused myself of fickleness, of inconstancy. I called up the image of my former lover to my mind, — but the spell was broken. Cut off, in a great measure, from the world at large, estranged from all my late friends and associates, what wonder that my affections were gradually centring around the being into whose society I was continually thrown? Still, I disputed the assertion of my heart, which was undeniably possessed by an attachment that threw my rash passion for Berkeley entirely into the shade. My feelings had never yet been deeply engaged, or the trials I had endured would have crushed me. The end of the two months convinced me that I was not qualified to judge of the consequences of a broken heart, since mine had never been out of my own possession, though I was now giving it away as fast as I could.

Somewhat earlier than usual in the afternoon Lionel came in. I informed him coolly, that there was a letter for him on the table. After looking for a minute at the superscription, he tore it open and read it through. I asked, somewhat pertinently, from whom it came. He replied: "A young lady;" then, observing that he must go out again, he took up his cap and departed. As he was going, I asked if he would be in to dinner, and he replied in the negative.

I was quite provoked. The disagreeable confession was yet to be made, for he had departed in such haste that I had not been afforded the opportunity for making it.

I waited his return until out of all patience. He came in at last, some time after the dinner-hour, and seating himself by the centre-table, took writing materials from the drawer, and proceeded to fill in what looked like several certificates.

"Have you dined, Mr. Hervey?" I inquired.

"Not yet," he answered.

"I waited for you," said I, "and, if you say so, I will ring."

"Whenever you are ready," said Hervey, in an absent tone, which showed that he had scarcely heard the question.

I rose, and coming up to the table, gave him, though trembling in every nerve, the three letters from Judith which he had so carefully treasured. He looked surprised, and asked where I had found them.

"On the table in your room," I said, blushing up to the eyes.

"Thank you;" — and having put them in his breast-pocket, with a muttered observation on his "confounded carelessness," he resumed his writing.

"You do not ask me," I said, actually gasping for breath, "whether I have read them, or not."

Hervey's pen stopped, and he looked up. His piercing gray eye, infinitely more eloquent than any language, was fastened on my face, — it fell again upon the paper, and with the quiet reply: "I could not suppose *that* possible," he wrote on.

"But, Mr. Hervey," I said, rushing through the confession as fast as my faltering tongue could carry me; "I have read them all three, so you perceive that it is quite possible."

There was no answer, — the pen travelled on without interruption, though a slight tinge of additional carnation was visible on his cheek. I saw it with a sinking heart, and, after waiting for some moments in vain for a reply, I ventured to demand it.

"Well, Mr. Hervey, what have you to say to me?"

"Nothing," was the reply.

This was truly sublime, but quite unsatisfactory. Drawing a little nearer, in a faltering voice I said: "Do you love her yet, Mr. Hervey?"

There was a decided color on his cheek — the hue, not of recollection, but of indignation. I could not mistake it. "You have your own way of discovering my secrets, madam," he said, "I am surprised that you should question me."

I stood stricken dumb by his side. A sharp reply had risen to my lips, but I checked it. The sadness that succeeded it was not so easy to control. My eyes were dimmed with tears, and two large drops fell on Hervey's hand. As I brushed them off impatiently, he looked up and asked what was the matter.

My heart was too full for utterance, so I rang the bell and ordered dinner. I then sat down by the fireside, and occupied myself in wiping away the tears which would keep coming

thick and fast. I tried to banish them by every foreign reflection that my memory afforded; but the subject of my ancient wrongs and former follies, was of no avail in the case of my present tribulation.

Hervey at last put away his papers, and in a manner which I felt to be very distant, informed me that dinner was ready. I said I did not want any.

"Don't be childish," was his fraternal injunction.

"Don't be sullen, you mean," said I. "I am neither childish nor sullen, but I won't sit at a table with any one who is at war with me, and you are, since you cannot forgive me for reading your letters."

"Perhaps I can with a tremendous exertion," said Hervey, laughing. "At all events, we cannot discuss the question starving. Perhaps, when the bottle is finished, we shall both be in a better humor."

"I hope *you* will," I answered, but moved to the table without any more parley. I refused the wine, determined that my humor should not depend on any extraneous cause, and Hervey, after the first necessary words had passed between us, relapsed into silence, though I noticed that his eye often reverted pensively to my face.

"Are you tired of living here?" he inquired, at length, during a momentary absence of the servant in attendance.

"Yes, I am tired of living with no one to love," I answered.

"Well, when will you move to Iowa?" he asked.

I did not care to go to Iowa; I might never get back again; but, not being furnished with an immediate reply, I could only sit still and wonder what was coming next. I did not have very long to wonder; no longer than till dinner was over, and Hervey's cigar perfuming the apartment, when he informed me, as a beginning, that he had received a letter that afternoon.

"Yes, I know," said I, "from a young lady."

Hervey's eye sparkled, and he gave his cigar a twist to disguise a smile which did not escape my notice. He then unfolded that the note was from Fanny Douglas, requesting to see him immediately at Judge Ostrander's. When he arrived there, she told him that she had had a great quarrel with the young ladies; that Mrs. Ostrander was in Baltimore, coming back she did not know when, and Miss Douglas desired to come down and take a room at the St. Nicholas, and remain under my protection until Mrs. Ostrander came back. He said he had answered at once, in my name, — had said the only thing that he could say, —

that she was coming down the very next day; and if I did not like the arrangement, I must settle it with Miss Douglas.

I did not like the arrangement, but of course I could not say any thing against it; besides, I did feel a certain sympathy with young ladies who had quarrelled with their hostesses, and were driven to seek refuge elsewhere. I observed to my husband that he appeared very much delighted, to which he answered that he was, — he liked Miss Douglas very much; and, as I had confessed I was tired of living with no one to love, and yet was not ready for divorce, he thought I must be delighted too, in the prospect of such a lively and pretty companion.

Fanny Douglas came the next day, and stayed nearly a month, till Mrs. Ostrander's arrival in town, and she was every evening in my parlor, flirting with my husband to her heart's content. I had enough of my old capabilities remaining to be most fearfully jealous of her, though I had learned too severe a lesson to contemplate the administration of any dangerous dose. Since our marriage Hervey had walked with me only once in the public streets, when it was the result of an accidental meeting with him down town; as we were both coming home, he had given me his arm; but I had not gone out with him on any other occasion. Even on Sundays he went to church by himself, and so did I; neither one asking the other a single question. Fanny, however, had plenty of walks in his company. In the mornings, as soon as he showed the least intention of leaving the hotel, "was dear Mr. Hervey going out? Well, then, if he would wait just one minute, she would be ready, — she had something to buy." That she never bought any thing I cannot positively declare, but I never saw any of her purchases, and it was a noticeable fact that whenever she took her afternoon stroll without me, she invariably returned accompanied by my husband.

At last Mrs. Ostrander came in town. I was heartily glad of it, and Fanny evidently sorry, for she kept sending up notes for several days steadily, deferring her return. I met Virginia Bourdléme in a store about this time. She said she was sorry she had been unable to call, but she would very soon, — her mother had been sick. I did not believe a syllable of her regrets, but did not care to be ceremonious, and sat down to talk while she made her purchases. First, I had to hear the account of a dinner-party the day before, at which Ram. Jones was present; then of a tea-party at the Aram's, when Mrs. Brancton had appeared, and where Mr. Jones's attention to the said Mrs. Hun-

ter had excited very general remark. Miss Bourdléme concluded by complimenting me on my confidence in Mr. Hervey, — she said we were the most free-and-easy couple that she knew; he did as he chose, and so did I. It was very fine, indeed, still if he were *her* husband she would not care to have him gallanting Fanny Douglas about the streets *all* the time.

Neither did I care to have him do it, but if he had paraded about with her from sunrise till sunset, I should not have spoken a word to him on the subject. Before my return home I met Gouverneur Aram. He stopped to say a few words, and observed, among other things, that he was sorry to hear that my gallant young husband had resigned his position in the army.

I had not heard of it at all. Lionel was not confidential, and not wishing either to reveal that fact, or to indorse what might not be true, I hurried home, pondering the words of my late interlocutor. Gallant young husband! he had said. Yes, indeed, he was the most noble and generous being in the universe, and I had been culpably insensible to his merits. When I reached home I found Fanny all ready dressed in the parlor, where the lamps were in full blaze. She told me that Mr. Hervey had just gone out, having left a message for me to the effect that he should not get in till an hour after dinner. I waited dinner till he came. It was quite a piece of attention, he thought, and he repaid it by talking to Fanny all the evening.

I questioned him about his resignation. He confirmed it, said he had tendered it the night before, but it was not yet accepted, and remarked that no Southern officer of loyalty to his own soil could longer remain in the United States army. In conclusion, he announced that he was going on the day after the morrow to Baltimore, but he did not wish to influence my movements, and if I chose I might remain all winter at the St. Nicholas. I said, quietly, that I would.

I thought he turned a little pale, but it might only have been the flare of the gas-light on his features. Fanny jabbered about being absolutely obliged to go back to the Judge's on the very day that Mr. Hervey left, dear Mary would be left entirely alone. Lionel took up the paper to see the hours at which the trains left. I came up to his side to look at it, also, and for the first time that I had ever presumed to such a familiarity, laid my hand on his shoulder.

He glanced at Fanny, whose head happened to be turned at the moment, then, with the words, "Mrs. Hervey!" uttered in a low but clear tone, went on to unfold the paper. The look by

which he accompanied my name, though there was in it neither surprise nor warning as his tone had implied, was still one to make me draw back as suddenly as though I had lain my hand on a serpent. I sat down on the sofa, and wondered what could have been the reason of that look and tone. It could not be that he hated me! he had confessed once that he loved me, and what had there been in my action to call forth such a rebuke? He had spoken of a divorce. Perhaps it was what he wanted. I decided to tell him, when we were next alone, that we would separate if he wished it, but, on the whole, thought it was too likely he did wish it to make it safe to propose the measure.

I sat and looked at him all the evening, and wondered how I could ever have thought him plain. What was the mere superficial, fading, worldly beauty which I had worshipped in George Berkeley, compared with that glory of the soul which shone in Lionel Hervey's eye? Never till to-night had I known what it was to love a worthy object in obedience to my judgment, as well as in spite of my will. I felt that I had enshrined Lieutenant Berkeley's character with imaginary splendors, whereas his superiority consisted solely in a few advantages of person and of manner. It was true that Lionel had faults; he was too cautious and reserved toward me, and too generous in his treatment of all the world beside; but the beauties of his character commanded admiration and esteem, — I gave more.

The next day while Fanny was sitting in my apartment a piano arrived, quite unexpected by me. I asked the men who put it up if they were sure that there had been no mistake, but they were sure there had not, and the direction to Mrs. Lionel Hervey was plain. When the men had gone, Fanny informed me that my husband had asked her to go and choose one for me that morning, and she had accordingly selected this. Hervey had said, that as I would probably find it very dull all winter alone at the St. Nicholas, he felt it necessary to provide me with all the diversion that lay in his power.

I was not altogether pleased. He might have let me go and choose it myself. What did Fanny Douglas know about a piano? I was quite sullen all the afternoon, and with no idea of being in a better humor to-morrow. All winter here, indeed! Did he think I was going to stay alone without him for the next few months, with nothing but a piano as a substitute for his company? He would find himself mistaken.

He came in a few minutes before dinner was served. I noticed that he yet retained his uniform, from which I conjectured

that his resignation had not yet been accepted, and, after his good-evening to us both, he sat down by the fire to read his paper Fanny spoke of the piano.

Lionel professed himself greatly obliged to her for her politeness, and he added, a few minutes after, that he trusted I was satisfied with it.

I said, coldly, that the instrument was a handsome one, and I looked at it rather unamiably. Lionel shrugged his shoulders and turned back to his newspaper, while Fanny, in what was probably genuine indignation, exclaimed:

"Why, are you not going to thank him for it? If I had a husband, and he gave me such a present, I should think that the least acknowledgment I could make would be to thank him."

"You are right, and I will thank him!" I exclaimed, and I started up, and, going up to Lionel, threw my arms around him and kissed him. Had not the action been instant with the impulse, I could not have done it, and no one was more surprised than I. Nothing in the world was ever done more awkwardly, and that consciousness might have created my embarrassment, apart from the repetition of the same reproving look I had called forth by a lesser offence the night before. His eyebrows contracted into a frown that remained there many minutes. I drew a long breath, and threw myself back upon a chair: this was more than insensibility, — it was actual cruelty.

An officer, who was to accompany Hervey to Baltimore on the following day, called in the evening to consult as to the arrangements for their departure. Fanny went upstairs to pack her trunks, which were to go early in the morning, and I fell asleep on a corner of the sofa in the parlor, where Hervey and the officer were conversing. I was aroused quite late by my husband to give him some keys, which that morning had fallen into my possession. The officer was just going, and when Lionel had returned from accompanying him to the door, I asked, directly, what he meant by treating me to such a fearfully black look, when I ventured on my late sweet little piece of thanks for the piano.

"Oh, yes, I was going to speak to you about that," he said, fixing his clear falcon eye upon me with a look that brought the color to my face. "In case you should wish to break up our marriage in the way you propose, you will find your cause embarrassed by these public demonstrations. I advise you, therefore, to discontinue them hereafter, and, of course," he added,

with a distant bow, "you will be assured that I am entirely disinterested in the caution."

I bit my lips with vexation, and made some remark about private demonstrations.

"Quite as bad in case of an interruption," said he, "besides, it is too much to ask of any young lady, unless where her heart is engaged."

I rose abruptly, and, coming up to him, laid my hands on his shoulders, and said, with a hurriedness without which I could not have said it at all:

"And when her heart *is* engaged, is it wrong for a woman to return the avowal which the object of her affections had already made? Is it wrong for a woman to confess that she loves her husband, when it is no more than what she has solemnly vowed in the sight of heaven? As I live, Lionel Hervey, I love you more than any one on earth."

He looked as though he did not understand me, and I repeated the assertion. For one instant there appeared on his face the expression of astonished incredulity, that must have crossed Dan Berkeley's when his step-mother gave him the assurance of her affection, — it was succeeded by one of almost anger. He drew away, pulled a chair around by the table, threw himself down in it, and with impatience, even vexation written on his face, regarded me without a word.

"Well," said I, after enduring the scrutiny for some time, "don't you believe it?"

"Believe what? that you have fallen in love with three men in the same year? Believe it, — no!"

"I am sure," said I, "the possibility of it is not precluded by any point of resemblance between my lovers. Mr. George Berkeley's conduct toward me was as different from yours as — he is from you."

"I do not think," answered Hervey, "that my situation can be considered at all analogous to his." He rose, and with a slight bow was leaving the room, but I stopped him.

"You cannot think me guilty of a falsehood! I never loved any man living till I knew you."

A look of incredulous derision came over his face — beamed from his eyes — wreathed on his lips. "Oh, nonsense!" he said. "It's late, Mrs. Hervey, — it's time you were in bed, — good-night."

I stopped him again to say I wanted to go with him the next day to Baltimore.

"Then you should have said so last night; I am sorry to disappoint you. I have not the money."

"Borrow it," said I; "I will pay it all back when I have my own property."

Hervey looked at me as though he thought the cup of his injuries was full. "I think you have said sufficient," he answered.

"Not quite," cried I; "I have one more suggestion to make, — you can sell that piano."

"*You* can sell it, if you do not want it," said Hervey, in a very cold tone. "I have nothing to do with it. At present, I have only money sufficient to take me to Baltimore. I will send you some when I get there. In the mean time, if you can obtain it by such an honest method as the sale of your furniture, you can follow me when you please."

"I won't sell the piano, Mr. Hervey, if it costs me my head."

"Very well, then, I will send you the money."

"I shall pay it all back," I exclaimed, as he left the room.

He did not heed me, and having decided that he was the most incomprehensible being I had ever known, I followed his advice, and went to bed.

Lionel and Fanny maintained between them all the conversation at the breakfast-table. I felt too sad, even to assume any gayety. After breakfast, they were closeted together for an half hour or more, while I walked about the parlor in an actual fever. I could not force even the smallest tear when Fanny departed; but she did not appear to detect the least unamiability in my undemonstrative adieux.

After seeing her to the carriage, Hervey came up to ascertain whether any of his goods were left behind him. I said, I supposed I should find him in Baltimore on my arrival three days hence. He said yes, that he would write immediately and send me his address.

When he had gone, I went to see Judge Ostrander to acquaint him with my projected departure, in view of which I should be obliged to defer the payment of my debt to him. He looked all astonishment, and replied: "Why, my dear child, that was all settled between your husband and me the day before yesterday."

In much surprise I pushed my inquiries, and the Judge informed me that, on Fanny's arrival at home two days before, he demanded how she expected to discharge her debt at the St. Nicholas. Her answer was, that the bill had been paid by Mr. Her-

vey. The Judge, quite vexed already to find that his neice had left his house, during the absence of himself and wife, was very much more vexed to discover that she had laid herself under so weighty an obligation to a young gentleman; and as Fanny informed him that Hervey was going to Baltimore, he (the Judge) had gone directly to the Courtland-street Ferry, and met Mr. Hervey on the other side, just twenty minutes before the cars started. The Judge assured Lionel of his regret that he had been so much inconvenienced by a silly whim of Miss Douglas, — said that the young lady, of course, in quitting the roof of her uncle and guardian, should have been prepared to pay her own bills, and he offered Hervey the amount which Miss Douglas owed him. Hervey, though he could not disclaim the justice of the proposal, still refused to accept the money, saying that it might in part cancel Mrs. Hervey's debt, and the remainder he would discharge as soon as possible. Whilst I was in the Judge's office, a letter arrived bearing the Baltimore post-mark. The direction was in Lionel's hand, and when the letter was opened, I saw that it contained several bank-notes.

I waited till the Judge had read the letter, and counted the bills before I inquired how Mr. Hervey had discovered that I owed any money. This, however, he did not know, and I was left to my conjectures, which were, at best, unsatisfactory. On my return to the hotel I found, as I expected, another letter from my husband, containing a few lines and bills for triple the amount necessary to take me to Baltimore.

I arrived in that city just at dusk; and, not finding Hervey at the cars, I went immediately to the Eutaw House, according to the direction given in his note. Lionel did not get in till nearly twelve o'clock, but I sat up till he came, and waited supper, though almost famished by reason of my long day's fast. He was without his uniform, I noticed, and this gave me further occasion of remarking the natural elegance of his figure, now that it was divested of the decoration which had before rendered those real advantages a matter of doubt. I scanned him with involuntary admiration, and confessed that I had not dreamed he would look so well without his buttons.

He thanked me for the compliment, and I then took occasion to scold him roundly for refunding Judge Ostrander what I owed him. I asked how he had discovered it, and added, for the sake of tantalizing, that I should pay it all back when I had my own money.

He paid little attention to the speech, and left the question un-

answered, asking, soon after, how I liked the idea of a residence in Washington for the winter. We had just received an invitation from his uncle, Mr. Laud, a wealthy old bachelor living alone, attached to his nephews, and to the eldest especially, and quite anxious to receive a young and lovely creature as mistress of his mansion, from which it was quite evident that he did not share the prejudices of the rest of the family against me. I said I had but one objection. I was afraid that I should meet some of those confounded Berkeleys there.

"No, you won't," was his answer, "I saw Gov. last night and he left this morning for Washington. He said the rest of the family were elsewhere."

"Let us go, then, right away," said I. Lionel said that he would go in three days. I besieged him to tell me why not to-morrow, and finally, to be rid of my importunities, he said he had not the money, but he would get it in four days, till the expiration of which time we would be obliged to stay in Baltimore.

"You can't get tickets for Washington?" said I.

"Yes," he replied, "but I can't pay my bill here yet. I have been here for three days, remember."

"You sent me twenty-five dollars the day before yesterday," said I, and I might have added that it was all gone.

"That's a different thing from to-day," he answered, and he tossed me his pocket-book. "There is something left there — perhaps it's a penny."

It was a twenty-five cent piece. Hervey remarked, as I threw back the pocket-book, that it was no disgrace to be poor, but it was very inconvenient.

This incident had set me to thinking. During the course of my married life hitherto, he had never enlightened me with regard to his circumstances, nor had I asked a single question. A purse, which he dignified by the name of Exchequer, always lay in the table-drawer of my parlor at the St. Nicholas, to which I went for my supplies. It was sometimes full — quite often empty; in the first case I helped myself, — in the second I managed without; occasionally he would observe that the Exchequer was low, and I had not mentioned it, and whenever he received his pay he would cram a few bills down the throat of the purse and leave it in the drawer. On this occasion, however, it was evident that Hervey's funds were quite exhausted, — he was completely run out; and after reflecting with some compunctions on the new handkerchiefs, white edgings, and black lace which I had purchased that morning, — and wishing that I had

the money to give him, I dismissed the subject from my mind with a sigh.

The next day, as I was walking out alone, I met my husband by accident, and I turned to accompany him a short distance. I was going back to the Eutaw House, and he to attend to some business in another direction. As we were waiting to cross the street, a poor fellow on crutches, with but one leg, hobbled up the sidewalk, and, accosting Hervey, uttered his petition in so low a tone that I could not catch it. My husband put his hand in his pocket and gave the maimed beggar the only coin remaining in his possession.

"Mr. Hervey," said I, as we crossed together, "that is your last quarter."

"I know it," said he; "you might have said it was my last cent."

I asked what he would say to the next beggar we met, and then inquired how I was to pay for the transportation of my piano to the hotel.

Hervey said, let it stay where it was, — we were to leave in three days certainly, — there was no need of so much moving.

A new, or rather an old, thought had come into my head. I revolved it all the afternoon; it was none other than the sale of the piano. Hervey came in about four o'clock, looked quite ill, confessed that he felt so owing to a heavy cold, and lay on the sofa until tea-time. I brought him a cup myself, but he refused to drink it, and went to bed at a very early hour.

The next morning he did not appear at breakfast, and it was ten o'clock before he joined me in the parlor. I noticed that he was extremely pale, and though it was evident that he was still suffering from indisposition, some demon, for I can call it nothing else, prompted me to exercise my abilities for teasing him. As soon as he had again taken his position on the sofa, I remarked that he did not look as handsome when he was sick as when he was well.

"Handsome! humph!" he ejaculated.

"Nor as good-natured," I added.

That was true, he said, for he felt very cross.

I pursued my stitching in silence for some minutes, until my evil genius was again brought into exercise by his asking where the brandy-bottle was.

"*The* brandy-bottle," I repeated. "You should say *our* brandy-bottle, if you cannot concede so far as to call it mine."

"Well," said Hervey, with a submission which should have

armed the most vindictive malignity. — where is our brandy-bottle then."

"I don't know," said I, "I have no use for brandy-bottles. I must have left it in New York. It's rather strange that you were sick so suddenly yesterday evening. It must be something worse than a mere cold. You were out all day, — perhaps you had some brandy then."

"How could I pay for it?" was Hervey's reply to this insinuation.

To so pertinent a reflection I had no answer prepared. He rang the bell, and, when it was answered, asked for brandy. It was brought, and after drinking rather more than I thought was necessary, Hervey again lay down upon the sofa.

Now I thought was a time favorable for carrying my project into execution. Accordingly I left the Eutaw House, after examining the morning paper, and discovering that a lady wished to negotiate for a piano. I went to the house mentioned in the advertisement, saw the lady, told her that I had a very handsome piano for sale which had not been more than a week in my possession, and brought her with me to the depôt. As soon as she saw it, the reluctance with which she had accompanied me, gave way to very different sensations. She offered me two hundred dollars, and I accepted the offer at once. I was young at making bargains, be it remembered. The lady inquired what it had cost me. I said that it was a present from my husband, and I had not known its price. The piano was boxed up tightly and left at the depôt. I returned home with the lady and received the money for her purchase. It was chiefly in bills on the Northern banks, some little silver, and five or ten dollars in pennies, which, tied up in a black leather bag, formed the most ponderous part of my wealth.

I took out a few cents to buy the New York papers for Hervey, and then hurried home to the Eutaw House with my treasure.

On coming into the parlor I found my husband where I had left him, on the sofa, fast asleep; and I perceived that the little morocco case containing my daguerreotype was beside him on the cushion, and his hand was lying on it. I attempted to take it, but his hand closed over it so tightly that I did not insist. I forbore to awake him; and, throwing the red sash which had fallen over his flushed and feverish face back on the cushion, and leaving the [illegible] on the table, I went to my room to divest myself [illegible]ing-dress.

On reëntering the parlor, I found Hervey seated in an arm-chair already deep in the papers. The color on his cheek which denoted that he was far from well had partially subsided, and he had drawn close to the fireside to banish a slight chill, evidently not caused by the atmosphere of the room.

"You should not sleep with your sash over your face," said I, "it is very unwholesome," — and I deposited my sacque of pennies on the table.

"What's that?— a bag of gold?" asked he.

"No; a bag of coppers; I have gold elsewhere," and to Hervey's evident amazement I drew out and placed upon the table several bills whose denominations I forebore to name.

"Have you been begging?" said he.

"No, I have sold the piano."

"You have sold the piano," he repeated.

"And brought you the money," I added, and I pushed it toward him. Hervey's command of countenance was almost perfect, — not a muscle had moved, yet the color on his face had forsaken it almost entirely.

"We have enough money now to take us to Washington," said I, "we can go immediately, it is very convenient to have things to sell."

"Very convenient," said Hervey, in a tone whose sarcasm was scarcely distinguishable even by my ear, "why did you not dispose of your wedding-ring, you would have made something more out of your lucrative excursion."

"I did think of selling my engagement-ring," said I, maliciously, "but the wedding-ring would have brought too little. I will keep that for some future emergency. Haven't I done well, though? I got two hundred dollars for the piano."

Hervey actually laughed. "I congratulate you on your talents at a bargain," said he; and he turned back to the paper.

"Take the money," I repeated, "my dear — Hervey. Here, it is yours," and I pushed toward him the table on which it was lying.

He took no notice of me. I pushed the table a little closer; it dislodged his elbow from the arm of the chair.

"You gave me a decided hint to sell the piano," said I. "Didn't you empty your pockets before me and complain that you had no money, and now you do not seem to think it enough that I sold it."

There was still no answer. I launched a second shaft.

"So you won't take it," I said. "I wonder you will read the newspaper, I bought it for you with this money."

Hervey's hand trembled slightly but he did not reply.

"A gentleman might give me an answer, I think," said I. "Mr. Hervey, will you take this money?"

"Don't make me swear, Mrs. Hervey, you came very near it a minute ago."

"Swear!" I exclaimed. "What! you, a Christian, swear, Mr. Hervey! it cannot be possible, and before a lady so unmanly, — I am sure you won't. Well, if you don't want this money, I will set it up till you do."

"You may sink it in the sea."

"There is no sea handy. I am surprised that you should be so chagrined because I sold a jingling old piano." I pulled back the table, and deposited the money on the mantel-piece, then I sat down demurely on the sofa opposite him.

"Well," I said, after watching the color on Lionel's face for some time, "how the thermometer fluctuates. Awhile ago it was zero, then again blood heat, pretty soon it was up to the fever mark, and now I see it is boiling heat. The tide should turn directly."

A short silence ensued, then Hervey threw aside the paper and covered his burning face with his hands.

"Going to cry about that?" I said.

"My head aches."

"I should think it would after all the brandy you drank this morning," said I.

To this taunt there was no answer. I sat watching him some time longer; then I ventured a suspicion that he was thinking of Judith Berkeley.

To this he replied by asking the hour, as I was sitting with the clock in full view. I was gracious enough to tell him, and then went on to descant on the fact that time went so slowly here where I knew no one, — I had not expected to be made such a nun of when I married him.

Hervey asked if I had been shut out from society in New York, and added, with more politeness than I should have manifested in his circumstances, that he was sorry for the isolation which I underwent at present. When we were in Washington, he trusted I would find myself differently situated.

Provoked with his patience, which I regarded as the result of indifference, I was silenced for some little time. The hand on the dial had measured the arc of half a circle before I decided

to level the arrow which I had held in reserve ever since the day on which I perused Judith Berkeley's letters. When I next spoke, I changed my tone from raillery to coldness.

"Mr. Hervey," I said, "there is one subject on which I have intended for some time past to address you. You have, I believe, a small daguerreotype of me in a morocco case, have you not?"

Hervey fixed his gray eyes upon me in evident surprise, and then said that it was very true, he had it.

"I demand it," said I, "give it to me if you please."

"It is not yours, it is mine," said he calmly.

"It is not lawfully yours," said I, "hand it to me."

"It is mine, and I intend to keep it."

"Ah, might makes right does it!" I exclaimed. "I never heard of a gentleman's stealing a lady's picture, and keeping it against her will."

"You may have my old suit of regimentals upstairs," said Hervey.

"You need not trifle," said I, determined still to goad him to the utmost. "I cannot bear the idea of your having that daguerreotype — if you keep it I shall look upon you as my enemy. I have nothing of yours, — I want you to have nothing of mine."

"You quarrelled with me this morning for not calling the brandy-bottle common property," said Hervey.

"I want nothing of yours," I repeated; "I sold the piano because you gave it to me, and I want you to return my picture. If any other man had it I should be perfectly resigned; but I would rather it should be in the hands of a galley-slave than in yours."

"Are you in earnest, Mrs. Hervey?" asked Lionel, gravely.

"I am in earnest, — perfectly serious; after that you may act your own pleasure."

Hervey took the daguerreotype from an inside breast-pocket. He opened it; but, without glancing at the face, snapped the case in two, struck the plate from its frame, broke it with an evident effort, cutting his hands on the sharp crystal, and threw the fragments into the fire. He pushed down the pieces far into the coals with the pocker; then took his hat from the table, and turned to leave the room.

"You have shown yourself finely," said I; "it is so manly to fly into such a rage with a woman."

"Rage!" he repeated, turning as he reached the door: "O Mrs. Hervey, what injustice you do me."

"Sir," said I, throwing back my head proudly, as, in anticipating his withdrawal, I was passing him, "an exhibition of temper that counterfeits calmness is doubly infernal."

Hervey's eye flashed. He turned upon me with a suddenness for which I was wholly unprepared, threw his arm around my waist, and drawing me so closely to him that to stir was an impossibility, said, in a tone which he governed with difficulty: "A kiss for a blow, — is not that the law, Mary? But you see I must not retaliate."

He released me — almost threw me from him, entered the hall, and ran down the staircase. I stood confounded. What did he mean; I had not struck him, nor even thought of it. Really, he had behaved in an uncalled for and unseemly manner. He had dislodged the band on my hair, which had fallen over my shoulders, and my dress was stained with the blood on his hand. I went to my room to adjust my toilette, and then I sat down and cried for two hours. Why had I been so perverse, — so insulting? Why had I tortured him so unfeelingly? I thought of what reparation it was in my power to make. I determined to say a multitude of unnecessary things, and offer all the touching apologies at my command. I adhered to these resolutions until the time had come to execute them. In the evening my fears lest Hervey would not return almost distracted me. I deferred supper as late as eleven o'clock, and at last he came.

He entered the parlor as though nothing had happened to ruffle his tranquillity in a year, begged my pardon for having come so late, professed himself nearly famished, and in his whole manner displayed such utter sang-froid, that my apologies, my appeals, my avowals all were palsied on my tongue. To breathe a word in regard to the incident of the morning would have seemed as much out of place as a love-scene in the office of a Wall street broker.

The next day I determined to go and see the lady who had purchased my piano, and get it back again if it were possible; but on going to the house armed with those unfortunate money-bags, I was informed, to my inexpressible chagrin, that the lady had gone North the day before. She was connected with some boarding-school, and had been agent for its principal in the purchase of pianos.

When I next saw Hervey, I told him, according to my usual custom, all about it. He laughed, remarked that he reckoned it was a Yankee school-mistress who had suffered a young chit of a girl like me to sell her an article for two-fifths of its value, and

he trusted the lesson would be beneficial to me. I extracted all the consolation possible from these remarks, and dropped the disagreeable subject.

The following day I accompanied Hervey to Washington, or rather I went one train in advance of him, for he managed to be left, and as he had the tickets with him, I should have been ignominiously expelled from the car, if he had not sent a telegraphic despatch to the next station apprising the conductor that it was an honest arrangement. I arrived in Washington safely after all my adventures, and waited at the depôt till Lionel's arrival in the next train. He apologized for getting left, and accompanied me to his uncle's immediately. Neither Mr. Laud, nor any one else was at home, with the exception of an old black house-keeper; the other servants were, as she informed us, "out a spreein'." Mr. Laud had left a message to the effect that his nephew and neice were to domicile themselves there, and he would be at home the next or the day after should nothing happen to prevent his return.

Nothing happened. Mr. Laud returned in the second day, and was pleased to take a great fancy to me, which I heartily reciprocated. During the first weeks of my stay I was with him continually; Lionel making remarks occasionally, in a playful vein, about being jealous of his uncle, and the possible loss of my affections, — all which sarcasm wounded me severely.

One day as I was playing at billiards alone with my uncle, he remarked on the coldness that seemed to exist between my husband and myself. He had noticed that we never went out together, said very little to each other, and that little on the most common-place topics. He said that since we had been married so short a time, an affection which ever had existed should not have cooled so suddenly; and he added that he should speak to Lionel about it, and tell him that he thought it very wrong. I prayed that he would not, and promised that he should discern no such coldness in future. Accordingly, for the next few days I made a great show of affection for Lionel. I referred to him, consulted with him, and deared him assiduously. I was particular about his overcoat when he went out, professed to be worried about his cough, and bought pills which he would not take. He was rather puzzled by it evidently, and as I scarcely saw him except in his uncle's presence, I had no opportunity of ceasing these annoyances. But Mr. Laud was not deceived. One evening, on Lionel's return from a dinner-party to which I had not gone, I was enlightened by a few words between him and

his uncle. I was in the dining-room, and their voices from the adjoining parlor distinctly reached my ear. To the first sentences I paid but little attention, the words "Southern army," and "active service," making the chief impression, till I was attracted by a question of Mr. Laud's.

"If you go direct to the army you will leave your wife here, Lionel?"

"Yes, I must leave her here, of course, — take her image in my heart," and he laughed.

"You have her picture, I suppose?" said Mr. Laud, "you have it I suppose."

"I *had* it," said Hervey, — "it was extremely pretty, but one day I smashed it like a fool."

"Not in anger at the original, I trust."

"Not exactly — a matrimonial storm. They will occur you know, uncle."

"I am sure," rejoined Mr. Laud, "I don't see why you have a storm of any kind with a person of her disposition. The Lord only knows the riddles in the universe! Why did you marry the girl?"

"I begin to think that the Lord only knows that too," said Lionel, with a second laugh. The light in the parlor was extinguished, and the steps of the uncle and nephew were heard ascending the staircase. I staggered through the darkened apartment, — dragged myself up to my own, and lay till broad daylight on my sleepless couch, with my husband's words ringing in my ears. He had as much as said that he was a fool to marry me; probably in that opinion he was not alone. My suspicions, my anxieties, my fears had now received the worst confirmation; daily intercourse with its object had totally banished his affection; the insight thus afforded him into my character had entirely dispelled the illusion of fancy. I determined to tell him when we met that I was ready for a separation.

But when we did meet, Hervey's manner was so unsatisfactory, so thoroughly non-committal, that I ventured only to make some allusion to the subject. I received the same invariable answer; till I was ready, he would not think of such a thing as seeking a divorce.

My pride, to which I had already done violence sufficient, prevented me from repeating the assurance I had given him. I felt that it would not be rightly construed. My conduct, I determined, should from that time forward be marked with a reserve and coldness which I thought would alter his manner, if it were

susceptible of alteration. I played and dressed and danced, all with the indirect intention of attracting him. I went to all the parties and soirées to which we were invited. I was admired, and petted, and flattered, — my bon-mots were repeated, — my music was applauded, — my table was covered with cards and bouquets, — compliments and invitations came in by the dozen and the score, and Mrs. Hervey was a standing toast at clubs, and oyster-suppers, and dinner parties. I gallanted and coquetted with senators, and ambassadors, and ex-congressmen; — I kept up a show of gayety which I did not feel, and suffered more than I could express in Lionel's utter unconcern. I heard him bantered and rallied about some young belle after every party. I saw his smiles and attentions bestowed on every woman in the wide circle of my acquaintances except the one who would have prized them most. For the whole promiscuous crowd his eye could brighten, and his wit could sparkle, till I came near, when it seemed that his heart turned to stone, and his manner to ice. My looking-glass told me that I was growing thin and pale, and I felt the reason, in that I received the hollow admiration of a circle to which I was indifferent, and yet was dying for the love of the only one who denied it to me.

At last I determined to flirt. For my assistant in the execution of this laudable design, I chose a worn-out politician of Southern nativity, a married man whose name is by no means unfamiliar to the public ear. I carried on the flirtation violently, — and with a recklessness of the world's opinion which now astonishes even myself. I was scarcely ever seen out of the company of my new cavalier. At every ball, and hop, and soirée, I danced and promenaded with him; — I walked with him in the street, — entertained him at my receptions, and when, riding through the public parts of the city I met him by a very frequent accident, I always invited him into my (or Mr. Laud's) barouche. People wondered what Mr. Hervey could be thinking of; and all agreed he was so deep in the secession element that he could think of nothing else.

It was rather more difficult for me to come to a conclusion. Whenever in my walks or rides with my usual attendant I met or passed my husband, his hat was always lifted with undisturbed, impassive equanimity, though I fancied I could detect a lurking smile of sarcasm on his lips. Whatever I did, or wherever I went, it was plainly a matter of indifference to him.

One morning, just as we were about separating in the breakfast parlor, there came, amongst the letters for Mr. Laud, one di-

rected to Lionel. It was from a former friend of my husband, a Mr. Mark Breimthall, introducing his wife, and this was accompanied by her card and address at Willard's Hotel.

Lionel handed the letter to me. I perceived that it was addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Hervey, and therefore some attention was due from me to the lady. When I had perused it, I looked up at Hervey and said, with an air as supercilious as possible, "And suppose that I should not choose to call on Mrs. Mark Breimthall, what would you say, sir?"

"Not a word," replied Lionel, as he walked out of the room.

"But I should think it very rude," added Mr. Laud. I made little reply, yet my determination was taken, and I fulfilled it that very day by going to see Mrs. Breimthall.

The visit was quite satisfactory. Mrs. Breimthall was a finely-formed, handsome, prepossessing woman, nearly thirty years of age, but her black eyes beamed with all the fire, and her cheeks glowed with all the animation of an early youth. Her manners exhibited the finished simplicity of a woman of the world, though evidently formed by experience rather than education. She was a Southern woman, and had been for some years abroad, and her conversation, relating chiefly to foreign politics, interested me so greatly that I staid much longer than the prescribed limits of a formal call. Mrs. Breimthall was peculiarly severe on the English, their condemnation of the Southern institutions calling forth her resentment so strongly and so naturally, that I observed on leaving that my husband would certainly fall in love with her for her political views. Mrs. Breimthall asked a few questions very interestedly about the gentleman thus mentioned, and only stopping to reply, and to admire her little boy, a child three years of age, I departed

I did not tell Lionel that I had called, — I left it for her to do when he rendered her that piece of attention. The next civility in order was the inviting Mrs. Breimthall to a dinner party at Mr. Laud's. I found that she was ready provided with passports to the best society, as she was already well acquainted with the rest of the company, and mentioned names among the *elite* of New York as those of her familiar friends. In Lionel she found a very agreeable auditor for her political views; I caught the names of Davis, Stephens, Floyd, and Twiggs, repeated between them, and from these indications should have judged that she was expatiating on the Secession of the South, even if I had not received confirmation strong in Lionel's observation, that she was a highly intelligent, sensible woman.

About this time the names of Jefferson and Gouverneur Berkeley were noticed by Mrs. Breimthall among the list of arrivals at Willard's Hotel. She came to me for an introduction to Mrs. Gov. Berkeley, as she had been informed that I knew the family intimately. I did not know Mrs. Gov. however, as she was a wife of but one week's standing, and a lady with whom I was entirely unacquainted; but to oblige Mrs. Breimthall, Lionel went to the hotel and invited Jefferson to come and dine at Mr. Laud's to meet her. Jeff. of course had been told my whole story, misdemeanors and all; but, as he cordially hated his step-mother to whom he had not spoken since his wedding day, he did not consider her treatment of me any example for him; consequently he accepted my husband's invitation, and invited me to come and see his wife and sister-in-law. I went as soon as was advisable without showing any undue haste, and could not regret the renewal of an acquaintance with Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, who now sustained in manner alone her former character as a lively Southern belle. She sent for her sister-in-law to appear, but she was not at home, and for the twenty minutes of my stay I was in a charmed atmosphere caused by the presence of a woman so thoroughly lovely and fascinating that I could not wonder at a former assertion made by Mrs. Berkeley to the effect that "her step-son Jeff. would rather be at home than in any other place."

It was not long before I found Mrs. Breimthall's acquaintance established with both ladies. Freely, indeed, did she criticize them. Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley was a poor-spirited, domestic, tame creature, — wrapped up in four little brats, and her selfish, calculating, puffed-up aristocrat of a husband. Mrs. Gouverneur Berkeley was a plain, hard-featured, positively ugly person, and a furious, ranting abolitionist. What in the world had influenced a handsome, high-spirited, gallant young fellow like Gov. Berkeley, to marry his antipodes, Mrs. Breimthall could not imagine. Yet although they possessed all these serious defects of character, she seemed to court their society assiduously.

All this passed before my eyes, while my heart had sunken low within me. Lionel's serene indifference still held on, without any variation. No matter how I flirted or coquetted, never did the least comment on my deportment escape him. One day in speaking to Mrs. Gouverneur Berkeley, on the subject of my usual attendant, Mr. V——, I noticed that she smiled gravely, and after a laughing remark from me about the innocence of

married ladies' flirtations, she said, pointedly: "Your husband avails himself of his opportunity to turn the tables, I see."

I was so much troubled by this speech that I appealed, as soon as possible, to Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, to explain her sister-in-law's observation, which she did at once, and very kindly, by saying that my husband was very attentive to Mrs. Mark Breimthall, — had I not noticed it? At the last party where they were together, he had walked with her, danced with her, and talked to her all the evening.

I had been ill, and had not gone to that party. On my way home from Willard's, as I was riding at a pace unusually slow, I perceived my husband and Mrs. Breimthall coming together down the sidewalk. Instantly I called up the sarcastic smile to my lip, and grave dignity to my bow, that had characterized Hervey's salutations to me, when he met me in company with Mr. V——. But, alas! — the smile was very feeble; — I felt the color rise to my face, and I could scarcely command myself sufficiently to bend my head. I went home in a fearful depression of spirits, — a depression increased on my arrival. Mr Laud called me into the library, on my way upstairs, and very kindly, it is true, reproved me for my public encouragement of Mr. V——'s attentions. He had heard it several times mentioned, — it was very generally commented on, — and he advised me to break off so inexpedient a connection, before it should subject me to any harsher censure.

The following night there was a large party, to which I, with my uncle and husband, were invited. My jealous eyes having been opened, I attached a certain significance to the fact that, immediately on Mrs. Breimthall's arrival, Lionel was by her side, his arm was offered and accepted, and they passed on till their forms were lost in the crowd that thronged the apartment. As I stood looking after them, Mr. V—— accosted me, and losing sight of my uncle's injunction, or rather, not being resolved to regard it, I welcomed this gentleman with a smile as bewitching as was possible, and followed Lionel and Mrs. Breimthall. V—— did not find me as pleasant a companion as usual, according to his own confession, as I could not avoid manifesting by my dispirited air that something was wrong.

"There is a lady here to whom I would like to introduce you, my dear," was uttered in Mrs. Breimthall's blandest tone. I turned, while she continued, — "Mrs. Lorrillard, allow me to present Mrs. Hervey," — adding, "neice of Mrs. General Berkeley."

If there is one piece of ill-breeding more than another which I have always detested, it is introductions with explanatory notes, and had I been on the best terms in the world with the "Mrs. General," my present feelings toward Mrs. Breimthall would not permit me to withhold my indignant correction.

"*Mrs. Hervey*, madam, if you please," I said, in a tone as quick and emphatic as my insulted dignity would allow. Mrs. Breimthall, with unruffled sweetness begged my pardon, and amended the introduction, after which she walked away with the air of an injured saint. During the short conversation which I held with the lady to whom I had just been introduced, I noticed that Hervey, who stood talking to Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, regarded me very gravely, and I was piqued beyond description.

"What is the matter with *you*," I said to him, when my new acquaintance had left me.

Hervey shook his head, but on my pressing the question, acknowledged that he had been struck with my cavalier manner of treating Mrs. Breimthall.

"It may be the custom," I answered, "among Mrs. Breimthall's acquaintances, to give a person's profession, antecedents, and the name of his great-grandfather, on an introduction, but *I* generally dispose of explanations *before* the parties are introduced. I hate personalities."

Mrs. Berkeley uttered a few words in favor of the innocence of Mrs. Breimthall's intentions.

"You would see the impropriety," I added, "if you thought about it a moment. Just imagine, — 'Sir, Mr. Eleazer Williams, supposed heir to the kingdom of France!' or, 'Madam, this is Mr. Morse, who invented the telegraph.' 'Let me present the astronomical Mr. Herschell, who discovered the new planet which bears his name.' 'Mrs. Stowe, distinguished very much as the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin!'"

"Each of these is a very different case," remarked Hervey. "It was not in the newspapers, I suppose, that you have quarrelled with your aunt? Mrs. Breimthall intended no rudeness."

"Well," I replied, striving to speak calmly, but unable to conceal the intense feeling with which I spoke. "She cannot be expected to know what is right. Society here is *so* mixed, — it was different in the circle in which *I* was brought up."

I turned away as I spoke, with an air of what I intended should be impressive hauteur; the next instant I felt that the air was exaggerated, and on looking back, I perceived that though Mrs. Berkeley was perfectly grave, yet Lionel's smile had not

been repressed. Annoyed and embarrassed, I proceeded to make some reflections on Mrs. Breimthall's general ignorance of etiquette. She said, "Mrs. Judge," and "Mrs. General so-and-so," "Mrs. Lieutenant," and "Mrs. Attorney," would certainly come next. To all these remarks Lionel listened gravely superior, and, perceiving that Mrs. Berkeley merely acquiesced in my criticism, I took the first opportunity of withdrawing from the group.

I found so much in this incident to regret, before the evening was over, that when Mrs. Breimthall sought me after supper, I welcomed her with surprised cordiality. She came to talk over a masquerade proposed for the evening of the very next day. Some of the first ladies in Washington, she assured me, were to be concerned in it. There were to be two large triumphal cars; and a permit had been obtained from the city authorities for the masqued procession. The Goddess of Secessia was to be represented, seated in the principal car, surrounded by the attendant impersonations of liberty, fraternity, equality, justice, concord, peace, religion, purity, truth, and others, quite as susceptible of personification. The States were to be represented, and Mrs. Breimthall offered me a place amongst them, if I disliked appearing in the guise of the abstract qualities. She desired me to give her an immediate answer, for she wanted the names of all her colleagues that night; and she assured me that Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley was already on her list. As Lionel was just conducting Mrs. Berkeley to her carriage, I had no opportunity for asking her advice, and replied to Mrs. Breimthall in the affirmative.

At an early hour the next morning I arose, intending to go and see Mrs. Berkeley. Lionel was up before me, writing letters in the library, and I stopped to speak to him about the masquerade. He said he thought it a silly affair, but as I had pledged myself to Mrs. Breimthall, it was my duty to stand by her from beginning to end. Having laid this admonition duly to heart, I went around to Willard's to see Mrs. Berkeley. She had been out all night, since her return from the party, at the house of a sick relative, and as I supposed that Mrs. Gov. Berkeley could know nothing about the affair, I forbore to disturb her, and returned home. Mr. Laud was alone, perusing the morning paper, opposite the steaming coffee-pot, and in response to my question where Lionel was, he said he had gone to Georgetown, and would not be back till the evening; and he

added, for my comfort, that he was going to leave Washington the day following, and did not know when he would return.

I was distracted from my melancholy thoughts by the arrival of Mr. V——, immediately after breakfast. He came to speak about the masquerade, and I soon found that it was to occupy me so much with preparations, as to leave no time for speculations as to its expediency. The young lady with whom I went to procure costumes, became quite confidential, and was so benevolent or so malicious, as to tell me all that was said about Mr. V—— and myself. It was worse than I had imagined or anticipated, and had been widely circulated amongst my acquaintances; and in a state of feeling almost bordering on distraction, I returned to my uncle's house. Never in my life had I felt less like masquerading; and I found that the cars were to stop at Mr. Laud's door, and the company had all been directed to meet in his parlors at the time of starting.

I went up to my room to dress, in deep despondency and gloom. While the picturesque braids were arranged on my forehead, and the quaint costume draped around my person, I could only stand, supported by the *etagere*, considering within myself how it was possible for any one to be more miserable. How I rejoiced that I should not again see Hervey. If he were in on my return from the masquerade, I would avoid him, and in the morning I would not appear till he had gone. How I prayed that he never might come back! How I hoped that this awful scandal might never reach his ear. Could I be certain that it never would, I would be willing never again to see his face.

The door-bell had been constantly on the ring for some time, and taking my masque from the table, I issued into the hall just as my uncle ascended the stairs. Mr. Laud took my hand in his, and regarded me for a few moments in silence, and from the depths of my bursting heart I was forced to exclaim, — "The world is cruel in its slanders, uncle!"

"Aye," said he gravely, almost severely, "that is what those always say who give the world reason to censure their conduct."

"Reprove me as you will, sir," said I, "I enter upon no justification of self; only in the name of pity I beseech you, keep these vile slanders from my husband's ear. Let him go to-morrow without the unnecessary pain of knowing to what harsh suspicions the woman who bears his name has been subjected."

Mr. Laud's answer was kinder in its tone than in its tidings:

"He knows it already, my child," said he. "Not one whisper of detraction has been breathed against you that he has not heard."

I went down. In the parlor nearly all the crowd of masques were assembled. I felt at once on my entrance the hollowness, the heartlessness, of the throng whose souls had been sitting in judgment upon me, and who had doubtless sneered upon and criticized me with the very lips which now were wreathed with smiles and flowed with compliments and greetings. As I passed around the circle I met Mrs. Breimthall, and she inquired where was Mrs. Berkeley.

I responded that I had not seen her, and at the same moment a step and a voice in the outer hall found its echo in my heart. Oh, what had brought Hervey home so soon! Why was this pang added to my pain! Never mind, it would be over to-morrow, and to-night it must be borne.

Lionel entered. As he gave his hand to a lady at the door, I noticed that his eye wandered quickly around the room, and after his graceful bow to Mrs. Breimthall, it must surely fall on me. I looked steadily away, however, but still retained my station by her side. At the same moment Mr. V—— came in from the room adjoining. I bent my head, but with no welcoming smile, and he therefore paused at the chair of the lady nearest the door. Lionel had seated himself at the end of a sofa which already supported the fair forms of South Carolina and Georgia. His manner was perhaps a shade more serious than usual; the thread of his discourse I was too far off to catch.

"Mr. Hervey," said Mrs. Breimthall, who had been scarcely able to support the twenty minutes since his entrance. "A word, if you please." Lionel rose and came to the table at which she was seated. "Are you of our party?"

Lionel said "no," he was engaged that evening, and expected to leave town by six o'clock on the following day. After a few more remarks, Mrs. Breimthall said, "How well Mrs. Hervey looks to-night, her countenance has a sweet and chaste expression that entitles her to be called one of Heaven's own angels."

Hervey's lip curled, and he uttered three words in a lower tone, which distinctly reached my ear. "Fallen, I reckon."

"Oh! oh! Mr. Hervey! how can you say so, you wicked man!" and Mrs. Breimthall shook at him the wand she carried. "Upon my soul I believe she heard you, for she is turning pale."

I came forward at this, and, governing my feelings by an effort almost superhuman, said, looking up at him with a smile,—

"I represent your native State to-night, Mr. Hervey."

"So I should have judged," he replied, glancing at the small

Virginian nightingale on my wrist, "though your device is not very conspicuous."

Mrs. Breimthall had just turned aside to address herself to some other member of the party, and I took occasion to proceed.

"Mr. Hervey," I said, in a tone of calm dignity, "I have been subjected to certain calumnies which, however the world may consider them, you ought to feel are unjust. It would have been kinder in you, therefore, to preserve your usual unfathomable silence at the mention of my name, instead of committing yourself to my enemy."

Hervey was silent, and I added:

"The course which you adopt in leaving me to-morrow is quite sufficient, I think, to declare your entire disinterestedness without making any positive assertions necessary."

Hervey was still without reply. Mrs. Breimthall again called his attention to ask him for certain lucky members which she said were needed to complete her figure. As he stood among the other gentlemen who surrounded her chair, she again regretted that he could not go in the party. He might have taken the character of a Roman orator.

"What! in this wild frolic!" said Hervey. "The idea is sacrilege."

"I hate people of so much staidness," cried Mrs. Breimthall, "that they can make no allowance for follies. I wonder that you allow your wife to go without you. Masquerades, you know, afford a fine field for license, and husbands are shy of them on that account."

"Mrs. Hervey," replied Lionel, "like the wife of Cæsar, is above suspicion."

"But Mrs. Cæsar wasn't," laughed Mrs. Breimthall; "a very unfortunate simile that, Mr. Hervey."

I gave him a look of absolute anguish.

"I am always unfortunate in my figures of speech," Lionel responded, "I assure you that I *am* rather apprehensive on Mrs. Hervey's account. Like most young women, she is giddy, and does not show the circumspection of her seniors."

Mrs. Breimthall, who probably thought that Lionel was going altogether too fast for her, now attempted to turn the conversation by saying that they would probably meet with adventures, as their characters might not call forth the approbation of the police. At that instant the chariots were announced.

Lionel turned from Mrs. Breimthall, and before I could fathom his intention he had taken my hand, and leading me up to the

spot where stood the gentleman with whose name mine had been so unfortunately connected, said, with the natural grace that characterized his every action:

"As I am prevented from accompanying your party, this evening, my dear V——, I resign Mrs. Hervey to your special care."

It was done with such perfect ease, that the decided point of the action was just sufficiently veiled to lighten my heart of its weighty burden, and make his meaning apparent to his auditors. Half the room had heard the words, and very soon I knew they would be circulated among the other half. The effect of so public a proof of my husband's confidence was beyond a doubt. Before I could look my gratitude Lionel had gone to see the ladies to the car, and I took V——'s arm with a thrill of exultation which I could not control.

Mrs. Breimthall was not long in arranging us upon the cars. She took the chief figure, with the attendant satellites around her on their pedestals. As I represented the State of Virginia, she gave me the principal place which was directly before her, and as soon as the procession was formed, with the monkeys, clowns, and torch-bearers in the rear, Mrs. Breimthall gave the word of command to proceed.

"Be at the Long House to supper," cried Mr. Laud, as we moved off; "I shall expect you at ten."

I looked back to see Lionel ascending the broad steps of the house, then gave myself up to the novelty and excitement of my position. The procession was followed and surrounded closely by the shouting crowd applauding the colors on the secession flag which floated over Mrs. Breimthall's head, and so occupied was I in regarding the strange faces which surrounded me, and the plumes nodding over their heads of the eight horses before me, that every thought of those absent from the company had escaped my mind till V——, who was seated directly before me under a canopy of roses, called my attention to the fact that Mrs. Berkeley was not there.

"She engaged to go with us," said I. "Tell the driver to stop at Willard's, and I will go in and ask her to come, if you will favor me with your arm."

It was within one block of the hotel, and the vehicle stopped at the door, retarding of course the cars behind it, and the pedestrians in the rear. V—— and I were on the sidewalk and in the hotel before Mrs. Breimthall could ask what it meant. I left my companion in a saloon below, and rushing up the stairs

and through the hall above, burst open the door of the parlor, and transported the State of Virginia, in her flowing robes, braided tresses, crested nightingale, and fillet of feathers across the threshold. Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley and her young sister-in-law were seated, engaged with their needles, on each side of the table, covered with their work, stereoscopic views, and political pamphlets. Gouverneur was lying on a sofa, with a book in his hand, from which he was reading aloud to the ladies. He closed the volume, and they suspended their work.

"Mrs. Lionel Hervey, or an apparition!" cried the elder lady, as I unbuckled my masque.

"Good heavens! Mrs. Berkeley! are you not in the masquerade!" I cried, in consternation. "Mrs. Breimthall said you were!"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Mrs. Berkeley. "I had no thought of it; positively declined to have any thing to do with it, when Mrs. Breimthall asked me last night."

"What can Hervey be thinking of, my dear cousin," said Gov., "to allow you to commit yourself in this way?"

"I do not know what *I* was thinking of, I am sure," said I, feeling hot indignation against Mrs. Breimthall rising in my breast. "It is too late now for me to consider that." I turned to go. "My dear Mrs. Hervey, I am very sorry," cried Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley. Gov. went with me down the stairs, and when V—— joined us, still accompanied me to the sidewalk. Mrs. Breimthall was in high displeasure, but she was forced to dissemble her rage, contenting herself with hurrying me into the car, and assuring me that I would bring the police upon them by my manœuvres. I was fearfully galled by the deceit which she had practised on me; and my discomposure was by no means assuaged, when I was informed by V——, who, if he was a politician, could bestow attention on trifles, that she had induced nearly all the other ladies to join the party by the use of my name.

While I was confiding my wrath to his sympathizing ear, it became manifest that our course was not to be so wholly peaceful as was promised at first. A squad of policemen impeded our path, and demanded that "that rag," as they denominated the flag, should come down. Chagrined as I felt at the consciousness of my unpleasant position, though fairly "in it," and with little idea how I was to get out, I could not restrain a feeling of secret exultation at Mrs. Breimthall's dilemma. Of course she could not lower the flag; had we not all kissed the folds before

we started? and yielded to the Stars and Bars the homage of a Confederate caravan? If *I* had held it, it should never have come down leaving me standing, before the power of the whole united North, let alone a poor squad of some twenty police. But Mrs. Breimthall, like most great braggarts, was a great coward, and the chief officer had only demanded the lowering of the "rag" in question a second time, before the flag-staff came down like a flail, between Mr. V——'s head and my shoulders.

"*You* a Southern woman!" I exclaimed, in a tone gushing over with scorn. I seized the flag-staff, and once more raised the folds, though not to their original elevation, over the car.

"Take the reins, V——, and make for the Long House," I added.

V—— caught the reins, and drove like a Jehu;—soon the crowd, the police, and our other companions were distanced,—we had all drawn up at the Long House door. It was much before the time Mr. Laud had appointed, and as it would not answer to leave the carriages at the door, they were all sent as fast as they came up to the factories, in which Mr. Laud was an extensive owner, and which were at the distance of a mile from the Long House. When the last of the party made their appearance, which they were enabled to do through a demonstration bordering on a riot, the masques were removed, and the doors closed upon the company.

Mrs. Breimthall had given her little boy, who, in the fanciful costume of a cupid, had borne a share in the ceremony, into the arms of his nurse, while she promenaded through the saloons with some of the gentlemen. That she was still very angry with me, was quite evident. My resentment had cooled long since, but she could not forgive the mockery of my rebuke when she dropped the flag-staff. That arrow, I knew would rankle forever. Her vindictiveness was not strongly marked; but I read its existence in the looks of hate with which I was constantly visited.

On Mr. Laud's arrival, about half past nine, supper was served in the principal apartments. Anxious as I was to be home, I was nevertheless under the necessity of waiting till the meal was over. Before the revel had attained its height, our party was startled by the intelligence that our procession had caused considerable excitement, and that our safest course would be to alter its character,—to get the cars from the factory, and return to Washington without the flag or any of the Confederate emblems. In the hurry of consultation, a sound of horses' hoofs

was heard at the gate, and the company was challenged by the police. Mr. Laud went to the door, declared that we were a peaceable party on the way to look at his factory, and that we had stopped for supper on his premises. As they were not provided with a search-warrant, they could not enter beyond the precincts of the Long House.

"Your husband is in uniform, I see," said V——, who sat beside me. I looked around, as Lionel, with two or three officers entered at the back door, and took their seats at the lower end of the table. His was beside Mrs. Breimthall, and I noticed that they were the last ones to move when we left the tables. It was much after ten when we left the Long House, and took our way in long procession to the factories.

Mr. V—— and myself were almost the first to arrive, and as the remainder of the party filed into the grounds, I stood holding his arm, while Mr. Laud was expatiating on the fine qualities of the new machinery which the renter of the mills had just made ready for action. There were six huge wheels whose vast bulk heaved up ominously black in the bright moonlight. Their flat ends were adjoining, each of those nearest the factory being raised a few feet above the next. Mr. Laud explained the process by which they were put in motion, — the sixth wheel which was nearest us could move only thirty seconds after the first, whose top was on a level with the factory windows. Six seconds was the time for each wheel to move its more advanced neighbor. The last wheel swung a mass of heavy black machinery underneath, which, running under the factory, was all complete except the framework that should conceal it from the spectator's view, and it was several feet removed from the high bank on which we were standing. A plank was thrown across from this bank to the wheel, and a means of communication with the factory thus afforded, as the bridge, a little below the building, was no further advanced in its construction than the frame. In the opposite direction, jutting off a few feet to the northward, overhanging the edge of the sixth water-wheel, was a parapet of rotten rafters, the remains of the old mill, — the communication with which was very precarious. On the end was flung an iron wheel, its tiring bristling with spikes almost worn out in the service of the former factory.

While Mr. Laud was explaining to me the process by which five mills more, which yet had no existence, were to be dependent on these ponderous wheels, I perceived that the party was crossing on the board of communication, over the wheel toward

the open window of the factory. The machinery was at rest, and Mr. Laud remarked, that though, not a dangerous, it was quite an unnecessary proceeding. On the principle that when one sheep in a flock crosses a fence the rest are sure to follow, Mr. Laud, V——, and myself fell in with the rest of the party, I making the transit from one wheel to another by the assistance of my younger companion. The factory was entered and explored from one end to the other; the gay troop in its fantastic dress traversing the extent of iron wheels and hempen bands, as though no rude servants of the law had tampered with its peaceful secession. Lionel and Mrs. Breimthall led the way to return, — the column poured after them through the broad window. V—— and I, inseparable companions, were the last, or rather thought we were. One man, whom we had found there on our entrance, remained to close the window.

The nurse, with Mrs. Breimthall's little boy, had entered as well as the rest of the party. The mother being as usual engrossed by Lionel, did not think of her child, and the nurse, having gone to the factory door with one of the waiters to look at the moon, did not think of him either, and as the factory window was closed by the man within, the party on the shore was supposed to be complete.

While I stood a little apart from the rest tying the jesses of the nightingale, I perceived that Hervey was advancing to my side. He said that he was going home then, as he was to leave the next morning, intended to take French leave of the company, and supposed that I would come with Mr. V——. He added, that as he would probably not see me in the morning, he would take leave of me now.

"Let me look at these buttons," I said, taking his arm and leading him a little apart into the moonlight. I bent my head, and, after a moment's gaze, found my suspicions confirmed, as the flickering beams revealed the characters C. S. upon the brass. I looked up into those calm, impassive features once again.

"Are you not sorry to leave me, Hervey?" I asked.

"Not sorry to leave Washington," he answered, evasively.

"I understand you," said I, with a sigh. "You have spared me the pain of telling me the direct truth. When will you come back?"

"It is very uncertain," he replied. "Can I be of any service to you before my departure?"

"No," said I. "I have only to thank you for the service that you have already done me. I will return with my uncle."

At this moment the factory window was opened, a small form was put out by the man inside, who once more closed the boarded portal.

"Heavens!" ejaculated Hervey, "there's Cupid on the wheels. That foreman must be a fool!"

A scream of anguish rang from Mrs. Breimthall's lips. The little fellow toddled on to the edge of the furthest wheel, where he stood laughing to us.

Fifty voices shouted to the boy to come along, and not to stand there all night. Mrs. Breimthall rushed forward to cross to the wheel; but she was held back.

"You will be killed, madam," cried one of the officers, "Mr. Laud has gone up to start the machinery."

"O God! save my child!" cried the mother.

Lionel Hervey darted away from my side, ran through the host of gentlemen — civilians and officers, who stood gazing horror-struck at the child — over the plank, upon the nearest wheel, then the next, then the fourth, the third, the second, and caught the boy in his arms. He turned, and had scarcely crossed the first short ledge in his course, when a sudden shock jarred the huge pile of works and wheels; the plank of communication was cast into the chasm below, and my husband was thrown on his knees with the boy in his arms, as the sound of the water rushing along the trough above met our ears. Carrying the boy, Lionel retraced his steps, and stood on the spot where the plank had rested at the edge of the nearest wheel.

"Don't throw the boy, for God's sake," screamed Mrs. Breimthall, as Lionel lifted the infant form to a level with his head.

"It is his only salvation, madam," answered my husband, and he threw the child with a strength which carried him across the chasm safe. A dozen stout arms caught the child as the water rushed down upon the first wheel, which commenced its ponderous revolution. No human agility could have accomplished a spring to the bank from that wheel, which in a half minute more would be flying around at a great degree of velocity, and the young man crushed in the whirling mass of iron below. Never have I witnessed any thing to equal in sublimity Lionel Hervey's air, as he calmly folded his arms, and looked down at the dreadful death, between him and which but thirty seconds intervened. Screams and shrieks of horror rose along the shore. His lips alone were mute.

"Uncoil the rope on the parapet and throw it to him!" shouted a voice. Suggestion and action were of the same instant. There

was a rush for the parapet, but the boards cracked and split: all — every soul who had essayed, started back dismayed. Who would risk his neck in a fall of thirty feet?

The next instant I was on the rotten wood. I felt it cracking, slipping under my feet. No matter, — I was on the parapet, — it was time, — the second wheel was going. In one second (and those were seconds in which one lives years) I had dropped the coil down by the wheel whereon he stood, — drew it across my shoulder, passed it three times around the ponderous iron tire, and grasped the end with the clutch of a drowning man clinging to his last hope of safety.

"Leave it as it is," said Hervey, for I was gathering up the rope to throw it toward him. "Don't swing it about," shouted the crowd. It would not grow steady in a moment. I watched the oscillation in an agony of suspense. One of the boards, brought from the parapet, was thrown across to the wheel. It would not have supported a child six years old.

"I prefer Mrs. Hervey's plan, gentlemen," said Lionel, with a slight laugh, as careless and natural as though he stood upon the boards of a Washington parlor. The fifth wheel was revolving. Hervey looked up at me.

"Can I save you?" I said, in anguish.

"You have," he answered.

The wheel moved; my head swam, and a blindness came over my vision. As it rolled over I felt myself thrown upon the iron with a shock which jarred the breath from my body, and held against the spikes by the heavy rope, which supported Hervey's whole weight. The rope was slipping in my hands. I clung to it in desperation. The sharp points were entering my side, tearing my flesh, grating on my bones, — the pressure of the rope increasing as Hervey neared the top. I suffered nothing (would I not have died to save him?), but I saw, with a sickening sensation, the blood flowing over the spikes, over the rock, over my husband's light and nimble form. The rope slackened and he was by my side, — the crisis was past, and the reaction came. Sense restored, the first, but not the ruling, consciousness was pain. I felt Lionel's arm thrown round me, saw his look of horror, and heard his exclamation wrung forth in accents of the deepest distress.

"*You* have not hurt me, — you never can!" I said, as I sunk exhausted, — where, I know not. I heard heavy planks thrown across to the parapet, — feet were upon them, voices around me, and as I was lifted from the ground and felt one arm withdrawn,

I lost all consciousness both of what I endured, and of what was going on around me.

. . . . . .

The advantage of youth and the blessing of health are quite as essential to the safe conduct of the system through a sudden shock as through a protracted trial of its temper. When I came to myself I felt as though just awakened from a heavy sleep — in fact I had been sleeping — since a previous interval of consciousness of which I had no recollection. I found that I was in my own apartment, partially undressed, lying on the sofa which had been wheeled in front of the grate where a coal-fire was burning. After I had looked at the red curtains, and the lamp on the mantel-piece, I perceived that Mr. Laud and the family physician, with the female servants of the household, were present, but Lionel was not there.

The first motion I attempted to make, acquainted me with the fact that my left side was done up in bandages. I asked if my husband were safe, and if he was at home. Mr. Laud replied that he was quite safe, but had gone to some meeting, having been sent for by the members. A suggestion was made to the effect that I should be put to bed, but upon my resisting the proposal stoutly, the doctor permitted me to have my own way, and I heard him say to Mr. Laud, before they left the room together:

"She must be kept quiet, and those drops administered once in two hours. If she becomes at all excited or restless, as is quite possible, give her half a teaspoonful from the phial on the shelf down stairs."

"Her husband will soon be home," said Mr. Laud. "Think she ought to see him?"

"No, — no, — not to-night. Tell him to have very little to say to her when he does see her."

I thought this infamous, but was too wise to rebel, knowing that I should gain more if I kept my own counsel. For some time I was entertained by the whispered conversation of the two negresses, in a corner of the apartment, my attention first attracted by the observation, "Dat Mas'r Lionel was de finest young gemman in de uniwerse."

"De young missus muss tink de world ob him," replied her younger companion, "to kill hersef a savin' his life."

"He tinks de world ob *her*," asserted the housekeeper. "I nebber wus so sorry for anybody in my life as when dey was a takin' her up de stairs. He stud a leanin' on de side-board in de hall, paler dan any ghost I ebber knowd."

"O you go long," the other rejoined. "He wusn't so pale but what he could send me to fetch him a glass of Port wine, when de doctor cum, and den to go off to dat meetin', — an' only just cum up here and stud outside de door, askin' de doctor a few questions a little while fust."

A few more sentences were expressive of interest in the married couple under consideration, with considerable speculation on the subject of love in the abstract. This chatter continued for some time, when it was interrupted by the sound of a familiar ring at the front door.

"Tell him that I wish to see him right away," I said, as the young negress arose to answer the bell. She went down. Soon I heard Lionel and his uncle talking on the stairs.

"Not a word to excite her, if you will go in," said Mr. Laud, "the doctor says it may be her death. She has a very high fever, and if you find that your presence quickens her pulse in the least, you are to give her a teaspoonful of laudanum from the phial in the dining-room."

"Laudanum, sir, — a teaspoonful."

"Half a teaspoonful. If you go to making love she may need more. It is unfortunate that you put it off so long."

To this observation no reply was made, and the next moment the decorations of the Confederate uniform shone on my gaze, as Lionel entered the room. He came forward, and having taken a chair by my side, laid his hand on my wrist, to note, I supposed, whether his entrance had quickened the pulsations. The investigation was probably satisfactory, for after a few quiet observations, he sat gazing into the fire with his arms thrown over the back of his chair, looking as composed as if he had not just escaped such a fearful danger.

"You are going South, to-morrow?" I inquired.

"I wish," replied Hervey, with a sweetness of manner which he rarely manifested, "that I could say it depends on you; but unfortunately my departure is absolutely necessary."

I called to the housekeeper and dismissed her. Hervey seemed a little taken aback by the movement. He found occasion to close after her the door which she had left ajar.

"I suppose you know what is coming," said I, as he returned to his seat.

"Nothing, I hope," replied Hervey, "as it is necessary to your safety that you do not agitate yourself in the least." "I shall be far more agitated if I let it rest," said I. "It has weighed for so long on my mind that I must avail myself of this last op-

portunity to speak; and you are less than a man if you refuse to listen."

"Yes, we will talk it over in the morning," he answered.

"No, sir, *to-night*," I responded. "I am stronger now than I shall be to-morrow. My nerves will be less quiet then, and my mind less collected. When you married me, Mr. Hervey, you told me that you loved me. I knew that unless that assertion was true, you would not have made me your wife under any circumstances whatever. I told you afterward that I returned the affection which I did not doubt still existed. You received that assurance without believing it. You treated it with the contempt that is natural for a man to feel for a woman who endeavors to deceive him with a show of attachment, while she loves another. I felt that keenly, I assure you, but worse than all was the suspicion to which it gave rise, — the suspicion that —"

"That I did not want to believe it?" suggested Hervey. "Was that a natural inference?"

"That *was* my inference, — ill-defined at first. It troubled me, — it haunted me; but I cannot say that I suffered more in the suspense it occasioned, than when it was at last confirmed!"

"May I ask how it was confirmed?"

"By the words of your own mouth, Hervey. Was not that sufficient confirmation? They were words carelessly spoken, and not intended for my ear. Perhaps you have forgotten remarking to your uncle, some weeks since, that the Lord only knew why you married me?"

"Now that you speak of it," he replied, "I do remember the remark; not only as a profane, but also as a false one." "You did not feel it to be false in all its bearings, Hervey. Consider in what a position it placed me! I felt that you were tied to a woman whom you did not love; nevertheless you had pledged yourself to me so unconditionally that you could not withdraw the protection you had given me. If I had offered to release you from your engagement to me, you would have regarded my conduct as the result of an aversion which I could not persuade you I did not feel. Then my hope was that the time might arrive when I could convince you, by positive proofs, of what you have refused to believe. I longed for it, watched for it, prayed for it, and now the hour which gives me that advantage has come!"

"It has cost you dear," said Hervey, with something like emotion visible on his features.

"Not too dear, Hervey; not too dear at any cost do I consider

the price of your confidence, though your love be gone. For the last time, and I wish I could say it were the first! for the last time, I repeat the assurance which once aroused your scorn. For the last time, then, I love you, Lionel, and you only. It is you alone who have taught me that I have a heart! You alone who revealed to me of what that heart is capable. Do you believe me?" I paused, but Hervey was silent, and his face was partially averted. I went on. "You need not hesitate to answer, Hervey. It is a very little favor, the last that I shall ask. Do you believe me?"

"Yes," replied he.

"Indeed," said I, "if your soul's not steeled against all evidence, you must believe it now. I thank you for your forbearance so far, and now that you cannot look upon it as the silly caprice of an uncertain and inconstant woman, I restore to you the freedom, which for my sake you have foregone. Take whatever means are requisite for the dissolution of our union, — you know far better than I what they are, — I trust for your sake they may be speedy; but to-morrow, when you leave to join the Southern army (I know it is for that you go), we separate forever."

"All this does not signify, to-night," said Hervey.

"It is nearly all said, now," I answered; "I have only to add that I hope you will not consider yourself as laid under any obligation to me by the event of this night."

"Certainly not," answered Hervey; "or at least a very small obligation, — only my life at what might have been the sacrifice of yours, — a contingency of which I never should have run the venture."

"I understand you, Hervey," said I, — "you would not have accepted your life at my hands, — I wish there had been any other means at your disposal. It is well that I know to what an extent your dislike to me has risen! Why did you not tell me the last time I proposed our separation; I would not have suffered you to wear your chains a single hour."

"You *must* be silent," said Hervey, "or I shall leave you immediately."

"Well, leave me then," I answered, struggling up on my arm with extreme difficulty. "Will you not at least stay to bid me good-by? You see now I am quite calm." And I gave him my hand, whose throbbing pulses belied my statement.

"Yes, I see; very calm," said Hervey, as he dropped my hand on the cushion, and rose from his seat.

"Shall I see you in the morning before you go?" I added, as he was quitting the apartment.

"O Mary, what a question!" He left the room, but only for a minute, and returning shortly with the phial of laudanum, poured out a few drops and forced me to swallow them. "I fear I may sleep till after you are gone," said I, "so I will tell you now."

"You shall tell me nothing. I lay my commands on you. It is time for me to exert a little marital authority, and you must obey."

To this I could oppose no argument. Hervey threw his sword and belt upon a chair, raised me gently in his arms and placed himself on the sofa so that my head rested on his breast. Troubled and anxious as I felt, the strong narcotic he had given me, aided by the regular, monotonous tone of his heart beneath my ear, soon had its effect, and I fell into a quiet slumber.

I awoke, to find Hervey withdrawing from my side to respond to a knock at the door. At the same time the clock struck the hour of five. The gray morning light was just breaking into the apartment. Hervey dismissed the servant who summoned him, with the low-toned injunction to tell the gentleman he would be down in a minute.

"Are you going now?" I said.

"Yes," was the answer. I watched him in a sort of tranquil despair. He bound on his sash, secured it by the heavy sword-belt, examined his pistols which he placed in his breast, fixed his cap upon his head, and took his gloves from the mantel-piece. Then he turned to me.

"I trust, Mr. Hervey, you will forgive what has been my selfishness hitherto. I must have seemed to you more than heedless, worse than heartless. I thank you for all your kindness, which I am as utterly unable to forget as to repay. Will you take off my wedding-ring, for I cannot; and may you be as happy as you deserve."

"And what will become of *you*," said Hervey.

"I do not care what becomes of me when you have gone, nor do I wish that you should ever waste a single thought on any secondary consideration of the kind. You have already done more than I had any right to expect. I shall remain here, I suppose, till I am able to go, when I can stay with Mrs. Chauncey. Remember me hereafter (if you think of me at all) as one who gives you the undivided affection of a sister."

"And how would you remember me?"

"Not even to you can I attempt to answer that, and the question is one which you might have spared me. You know that I can never, never forget you, and if your name hereafter is unspoken by my lips, it must be cherished as the dearest in my heart. My most fervent blessing, my most earnest prayer is yours; if we meet again may it be as friends and not as strangers."

"Do you take me for a brute or a devil?" said Hervey, as with eyes that were flashing, he came up to my side. "I must go, indeed; but I must first assure you by my hope of salvation, of what, for the last six months, six ages rather, I have been dying to tell you; what I refrained from telling you only because I felt that it would be highly ungenerous to one in your position, namely, that the love of my whole heart is unreservedly yours; and when I now depart, I go your husband by every law human and divine."

"No, no, Hervey," I exclaimed. "I felt that you might say this, it is very generous, and it may be true; but it is entirely useless. I can listen to no argument, for my determination is taken."

"Then, my dearest Mary," answered Hervey, as he kneeled beside me, and touched my forehead with his lips, "you must revoke a judgment which you have passed upon me without giving me a hearing. These few moments are all that are granted me, before a parting for a term of weeks, in reality short, but to one who loves as I do, interminably long; how then can you waste them in a discussion which can have but one result! I cannot listen to a proposal so preposterous as that which you have made me! Reflect on it; you have not a friend nor a relative on the face of the earth, nor have I one that is dearer than you. I have won your affections, though how, I am at an utter loss to conceive, — and you ask me to leave you at the mercy of a world in whose sight you have been already sufficiently compromised, — at the very moment when I am indebted to you for the highest service one human being can render another. Moreover, Mary, you are mine, and I yours, by the most sacred, the most solemn obligations. You say that we must separate, and offer me no other reason than that I could not believe myself possessor of a blessing for which I had never dared to hope. When I stood with you before the altar, I meant every word I uttered; if you broke the compact, I never should have done it. I plighted to you then and there a hand and a heart which were yours forever; I gave to you irrevocably a love

which was longer than life, stronger than death; a love which no estrangement, no separation could have made me transfer to any other created being. My vows were carved in granite, and you should remember that a compact sanctioned by Heaven, Heaven alone has the right to annul. The law of no State, the decision of no court, could make me feel it to be virtually dissolved, as long as we both live; and you would only force me to a greater sacrifice than that for which you thanked me. Have you heard me?"

I turned my face from the cushion in which I had buried it, that he might not read on my features the emotions with which my heart was full, and answered, that I had heard every word.

"Mary," he continued, "the doctor predicts your recovery in less time than I could have expected. The excitement which you have unfortunately undergone may retard it; my uncle will write to me till you are able. Will you then hold yourself ready to join me across the Potomac, at an hour's notice?"

"Your commands are my pleasure," was the only reply I could make.

"Thank you; thank you for the brightest morning and the happiest hopes that have dawned upon my life. I go to-day without a single penny in my pocket, but poor as I am, I am richer in my one little lamb than if I were owner of the wealth of the Indies. Good-by, then, if the word must be spoken; but our separation will be very short."

He lingered a few moments more, then the last words were said, the parting was over; my husband's step receded on the stair-case, and I heard the sound of the horses' feet, as he with his companions rode away from the door.

Happy as I was, the reaction consequent on the trial to which I had been subjected, was severe, though of short duration. My mental happiness and sound constitution made my speedy recovery a matter of no doubt whatever. In less than two weeks I was able to leave my apartment, after a confinement rendered much less irksome, not only by the company of my uncle, but by the visits from my friends, which were constant and frequent. V—— called several times to inquire after my health, but I did not see him. Mrs. Jefferson and Mrs. Gouverneur Berkeley, separate, or together, often spent hours with me at a time. Mrs. Breimthall left a card at the door, which was the last piece of civility evinced on either side, as I was spared the trouble of a speculation about the acknowledgment of the compliment when I was well, for by that time she had left the city.

As the mail communication with the South was as active as ever, there was nothing to prevent Lionel's letter from coming three and four times a week, and in a shorter time than ever my sanguine desires had led me to anticipate, I was able to reply to them myself, the course of my rapid convalescence marked by the increasing length of my epistles.

"Mary," said Mr. Laud, one morning after my return from a walk to the hotel, whither I had gone to see Mrs. Berkeley, "Lionel has written to say that he will be at Alexandria to-night. Are you ready to cross the river?"

That was quite a superfluous question. I had been ready for some time, and in the afternoon of that same day left Washington for Alexandria, in company with my uncle. I sat with him in the railroad depôt till every other individual had left it, and had just made up my mind, late in the evening, that Lionel would not come, when a figure in the dress of an officer entered the dimly-lighted saloon, and as I rose and came forward, I was clasped in the arms of my noble young husband. Mr. Laud took leave of us with the assurance that we were soon to meet again, though of course not before Lionel and I had left Richmond, whither we were to depart directly, as his regiment was drilling in that city. My husband informed me that the object of this impromptu journey having taken him to Bennington, he had met his father accidentally in that town, and Mr. Hervey had insisted on his son's accompanying him home. Lionel had accepted the invitation, seen his mother and sisters, who had received him with the utmost warmth, and as kindly as though no estrangement had ever existed between them; but not a single word had been uttered by any one of them about me. I was very glad to learn that a spirit of family dissension, of which I had been the cause, was so happily laid at rest, and quite contented with the present state of affairs. I could not expect my mother and sisters-in-law to differ from the rest of the world in their estimate of my character, and it was not my wish to attempt any renewal of my former intercourse with them.

"I have some news for you," said Hervey, one evening, a short time after our arrival in the city of Richmond, as we sat conversing at an upper window, on the environs overlooking the calm and peaceful flow of the river, on which the setting sun was casting his departing rays. "Mr. George Berkeley is engaged to Miss Fanny Douglas."

I did not start, but I felt the blood rush to my face.

"This cannot be true, Lionel!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, my dear, I cannot console you by calling it a rumor," he replied. "I heard it last night at the mess-table, and this morning I met Captain Charles Berkeley, who is just going North. He says that George is at the Ostranders, in New York, and he confirmed the report; but qualified by the observation that the family are used to his engagements by this time. The blush has not subsided, I perceive."

"Does it make you jealous?" said I, with a smile which I could not suppress.

"Two months ago," he answered, "it would have been confirmation strong."

"And now, Lionel?"

"Now I can only look and admire," he replied, with a laugh.

This was highly gratifying, yet with the thrill of pleasure which the idea of his complete confidence caused me to experience, there was mingled a strange regret for the news which he had told me. George Berkeley engaged to Fanny Douglas! Why, I had heard him say that she was one of the vainest, most frivolous specimens of womankind he had ever known, and that her head was as empty as an egg-shell. How inexplicable that he should have reversed that judgment. I was not chagrined, but I *was* disappointed. I had expected better things of him than these (it was only two months subsequent that I learned this engagement also was dissolved, and set down Berkeley as a confirmed floating character); but by this time I was so far indifferent as to be able, in regarding the spectacle of a noble nature in ruins, to trace some reflection of its original state in the fragments.

The next morning I went to see Mrs. Jefferson Berkeley, who had just arrived in town. She made no allusion to her brother-in-law's engagement, and I could not feel that I should look wholly unconscious in broaching the subject. As I was walking home in somewhat of a hurry, for I expected my husband's arrival in the course of the morning, I was joined by a young officer belonging to a regiment in the adjacent encampment. After we had conversed for a short distance on desultory topics, my companion, who knew next to nothing of my antecedents, suddenly inquired if I were not acquainted with the Berkeleys. I made my usual answer to that question, by stating that I was related to them by adoption; but was a stranger to nearly all the family.

"There has been quite a serious fracas among them lately, I hear," my informant proceeded, "Mr. Ramsay Jones has lately

fought two duels in Baltimore, the first with Captain Hunter, who married Miss Judith, and the other with Col. George Berkeley."

Almost breathless with anxiety I inquired into the result of the duels, and the officer informed me that Hunter had been wounded by Jones, and Jones by Berkeley. The trouble originated by Hunter's jealousy of Jones. Mrs. Hunter's flirtation with that gentleman, had for a long time occasioned much remark. She had left Georgia for Baltimore a short time before, or a short time after Jones. Her husband followed within a few days, met Jones at Baltimore, and insulted him; a meeting was appointed; the duel took place early in the morning, resulting in serious disadvantage to the captain. The following day the duel with Berkeley took place, in which affair Mr. Jones did not come off so well, as he had been severely wounded. The officer added that the law had taken no notice of the affair.

Much excited by this information, I hurried home with all possible despatch, and being informed that my husband was in, I rushed upstairs to my sitting-room, where I found him seated at the table smoking, with writing materials and a paper of accounts spread out before him. I noticed, however, that he was not writing, and the puffs which he drew on the cigar were unusually quick and short. As soon as I entered, however, he pulled the paper toward him, and took up the pen. Mastering my agitation as well as I was able, I approached and asked what he was busy about.

"Our Quarter-master's report," said he.

"Can't he make it out himself?"

"He can't spell," said Lionel. "That is, he can spell, but not correctly, so I'm putting in a few letters here and there. Don't mention it, however, among your cronies in the regiment, for it would not redound to his advantage."

"I have been walking with one of my cronies, as you call them," said I, "Captain Tillinghast, and he tells me something which is news for *you*."

"The double duel at Baltimore? I have heard of it."

"What an infamous woman Judith is!" I began, and I proceeded at some length on this subject, assuring Hervey that he ought to be congratulating himself that he did not marry her.

Hervey quietly but emphatically gave it as his opinion that Hunter had acted in a very hasty and uncalled-for manner. Judith had, at most, been no more than giddy and thoughtless in her conduct. Hunter was a rash, excitable man; and Lionel

questions;' instead of which you confessed to me the motive that actuated you with a candor that surprised me. I did not imagine that you were marrying me for any other reason than to punish Berkeley, and yet you acknowledged it as a circumstance so derogatory to your character, as not to be met by my estimate of you. I know how unwelcome is the sound of a lover's assurances to a heart whose affections are already engaged. I guarded, therefore, against giving you any intimation of the state of my own sentiments until you demanded to know them; when I felt that I must tell you the truth, though it should lead you to revoke your decision."

"Pray satisfy my curiosity in one particular," said I; "where did you obtain that little daguerreotype of me that you destroyed?"

"That is easily answered," replied Hervey; "you know, I suppose, that Dan Berkeley had one in his possession."

I had given it to him one day in Virginia, and I stated the fact.

"After his death it fell, with the rest of his worldly goods, into his brother's hands. I happened to see it some time previous to his engagement, and asked him to give it to me. Rather an insane request, when all the circumstances are considered, and Berkeley refused it; but the next day he sent to have it copied, and gave me the copy."

"He had no right to do that."

"You may as well say I had no right to take it."

"Do you not think it very strange, Lionel, that he should be engaged to such a girl as Fanny Douglas?"

"I account for it, my dear, by the fact that he is utterly reckless. I suppose that he cares little whom he marries, and thinks it may as well be Miss Douglas as any one else."

"Were you so rash as to make him your confidant, Lionel, when you asked him for the picture?"

"I *was* so rash. I knew the confidence would never be betrayed even to you. As at that time he fully determined on offering himself to you, his presenting me with your picture was an act of kindness for which I felt duly grateful."

"You showed your gratitude finely," I answered, with a laugh. "Ah, Lionel! had I only *known* you last winter, I should never have dreamed of loving any one else."

Quietly but rapidly those few months went by. Now that the happiness with which they were replete is crushed forever from my heart, I look back upon them as a dream too bright and glo-

rious to be of any greater duration. The summer is not spent, the shadows of night are not lengthened, yet the star of my life has set, and the leaves of my summer are withered and blighted; — the sun has been taken out of my heavens, and the blast of desolation has swept over my path. From the fearful storm that raged on the field of Manassas on that July Sunday, many rode off unscathed and uninjured, to reap in the plaudits of an admiring world the harvest due to their first great victory. Not a stone marks the spot where the noblest heart in which honor and principle and patriotism ever dwelt, is crumbling to ashes, — not a tongue may tell where the blood of that brave young life ebbed away in its death-struggle. I must travel on day by day to the close of my weary journey; but my earthly love, which is, in his words, "longer than life, and stronger than death," is buried in the unknown grave in which, in his last long sleep, is lying, and from which only the voice of Him who judgeth right and wrong shall awaken, Lionel Hervey.

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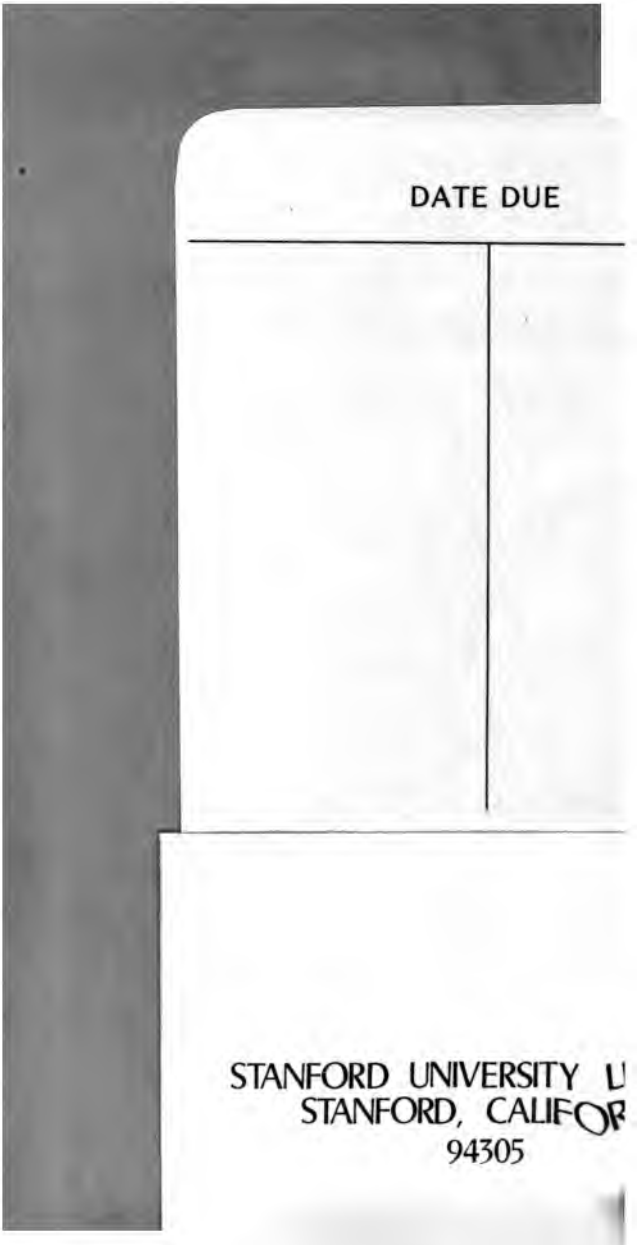

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